

THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE,
AND RESTORED TO ITS
ORIGINAL PURITY.

BY A GENTILE CHRISTIAN.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

WRITTEN IN DEFENCE OF
WOUNDED AND DESPISED TRUTH.

May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know, therefore, what these things mean. Acts xvii. 19, 20.

And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts, —with false and absurd doctrines—brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts xix. 18, 19.

By education, most have been misled:
They so believe, because they were so bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began:
And thus, the child imposes on the man.

V O L. V.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

MDCCLXXXIV.

THE
GOVERNMENT
CAPTIVE
ORIGINAL
BY A GEN.



Entered in Stationers-Hall.

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E R R A T A.

Page 8, line 16, for should, *read*, shall. Page 18, line 20, *read*, and of his being pursued by Saul and banished, &c. Page 138, line 25, after in time of his exile; *read*, but more especially of Saul, who, it is said, wanted to take away his life. Page 139, line 21, after ever, *read*, and likewise of his marriage with Pharaoh's daughter. Page 142, line 29, after blessed." *read*, And also, when they would wish well to one another, they shall say, God make thee as happy as Solomon. Page 163, line 30, for divide, *read*, derived. Page 169, l. 31, for bight, *read*, bright. Page 170, line 4, after weakness, *read*, thereof, than, &c. Page 176, line 28, for thee, *read*, you; line 29, for you, *read*, thee. Page 279, line 8, dele and, and *read*, deists may be distinguished. Page 292, line 2, for, make, *read*, take; Ibid, line 15, after danger: *read*, for to be silent, would be to let people perish in our fight, when in our power to save them. Page 294, line 15, *read* the Alcoran with Mahometans, and, &c. Page 297, line 6, after prevent, *read*, if I may so speak. Page 335, line 8, for eighteen, *read*, eight. Page 356, last line, after are, *read*, indeed by far, &c. Page 358, line 27, for brimful, *read*, broomful.

T H E
G O S P E L R E C O V E R E D,
F R O M I T S
C A P T I V E S T A T E.

B O O K V I I.

D I A L O G U E I I I.

Of the Conflagration, or End of the World.

JUD. **S**INCE you have with so much freedom delivered your sentiments upon the two former subjects, there is another still, on which I would wish to have your opinion, which is as follows; *viz.* the conflagration or end of the world, which is said will be destroyed by fire.

GEN. That the world shall be destroyed by fire, is of what I have not the smallest idea or suspicion. I know, indeed, that it has been the vulgar opinion, of a great many both of Jews and of Heathens, most ignorantly to believe that the world will be burnt up and destroyed by fire: this opinion they adopted, in contradistinction of its having been

once drowned by a flood or deluge of water. And thus, according to the common hypothesis received as in the above, the apostle Peter expresses himself, 2 epistle Chap. iii. 7, 10, 11, 12. “ But the heavens and the earth which
“ are now, by the same word are kept in store,
“ reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men. But
“ the day of the Lord will come as a thief in
“ the night; in the which, the heavens shall
“ pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth
“ also, and the works that are therein, shall
“ be burnt up. Seeing then that all these
“ things shall be dissolved, what manner of
“ persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God,
“ wherein the heavens, being on fire, shall
“ be dissolved, and the elements shall melt
“ with fervent heat?” The apostle therefore, in order to bear home a lasting impression of the gospel, and doctrines thereof, upon the minds of the people, that they might be aware against the evil of sin, he there warns them of a judgment to come, and of the end of the world, with the different circumstances with which it is said to be attended, according to the received opinion of the ancients, *viz.* both Jews and Heathen authors, adopted thro’ their gross ignorance or want of knowledge, as observed in the above. But that this hypothesis, of the world having been destroyed by a flood, or deluge of water, and that it

shall again undergo a second overthrow or destruction from a different element, *viz.* fire, is I apprehend, a greater contrast, than what such as are patrons for these hypotheses, are properly aware of: for it is said, that all the different species of the animal creation, in which was the breath of life, or lived in the airy element, were all preserved by means of an ark, as well as those who lived in water, who could not be hurt by that element, which cut off the rest of the animal tribes. But if such a thing as that the world should be destroyed by a conflagration, there is no possible means left by which any of the animal tribes, or species thereof, whether in or out of the water, could be saved: for there is no possible means of escape or preservation of life in the midst of a conflagration, or world of fire.

Hence, some species of life can exist in, and others upon the face of the great deep, or an abyss of water; but never possibly can, either in or upon a sea of fire—No.

JUD. But though every living soul should be cut off, it is easy with God to create a new race of animals, after the conflagration is over and past.

GEN. In answer to your objection, it is, in every respect, just as easy for God to create a world, with all the fulness thereof, as to create or give being to one atom of matter, or single animal upon the surface of this present globe, or world which is already made.

JUD. But if the world is burnt, will not that reduce it to nothing?

GEN. No: That is what can never possibly take place; for burning, if the world consisted of such matter as is subject to be devoured by fire, might, indeed, change its mode, or reduce it to a heap or world of ashes, but can never possibly annihilate or reduce it to nothing—No. It is no doubt certain, that when it pleased God that this, as well as every other world, should exist, he willed it into being by an immediate act of his divine power; and is thereby established, unalterable, so long as God shall judge it necessary for it to exist. Hence; for there is no power, nor operation, can possibly annihilate matter less than that which gave it being; and whenever it should please God that this world, or yet any other shall be no more, they shall immediately cease to exist: for it requires the same degree of power that gave being to matter, to annihilate or reduce it to nothing, which caused it at first to exist: for it was, no doubt, easy with God to will this world, and others, with all the fulness thereof, into being, in the smallest part of a moment; and who knows or can say but he did; as for my part, I have not the smallest doubt, but even perfectly believe it: for it is said in Psalm xxxiii. 9. “For he spake the word, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.” And also, in Psalm cxlviii. 5. latter clause, “For he commanded, and they were created.” Both of which texts speak only as of one immediate act.

And if God, as in the above, spake this or o-

ther worlds into being, by an immediate act of his divine power, I have not the least doubt, but, that when his will is that they shall cease to exist, he shall, in every respect, as instantaneously speak or reduce them into nothing. These, and others of like nature, are the very ideas that I have adopted concerning the beginning and end of worlds; but that any of which worlds shall be destroyed or end by a conflagration, according to the ancients, for which they ascribe different causes, is what I have not the least or smallest idea of.

Hence, these, and the like prodigies, may well amuse and be received by the ignorant and unthinking croud, but never will by such as are persons of judgment. But whether the world shall come to an end in whatever number of years, or be continued, none knoweth thereof but God.

DIALOGUE IV.

Of a Future State.

JUD. **H**AVING used the freedom to ask your sentiment upon this last additional subject, and as you have not declined an answer to my request, I shall, therefore, ask you as follows. As I am fully certain you believe in a future state (in which will be rewards and punishments assigned to every one, according to their works; or in other words,

where it is said, The righteous shall go into heaven, and the wicked into hell; and the one thereof shall be happy, and the other miserable for ever), What is your opinion of the nature, and situation of these two distinct places, *viz.* heaven and hell?

GEN. That there is a future state, a heaven and a hell, and that the righteous will be happy in the one, and the wicked miserable in the other, is what I verily believe; but that either of these consist of a locality, according to the received vulgar opinion, is of what I have not the smallest idea. That there is a state of happiness, which is called heaven, and a state of misery called hell, that I believe; but that either of these should be understood to mean a place, or locality, is what (as exprest before) I have not the very smallest idea of.

Hence, what we are, therefore, to understand by the word 'heaven', means only a state of happiness or enjoyment of God; and what is to be understood by the word 'hell', means a state of misery, or punishment for sin: for no place whatever, a fiery furnace not excepted, can possibly make the soul that is happy in the enjoyment of God miserable. On the other hand, neither is it possible for a condemned conscience, or soul that accuseth itself upon account of sin; though dwelling in a palace, or in a paradise, if mistrusting the forgiveness or mercy of God, to be happy: for it is only the soul, or rational spirit, that can possibly make the being either happy or miserable.

Hence, a soul that is happy may, indeed, while in the body, be liable to different embarrassments, either from pain, trouble, or worldly circumstances, but cannot possibly be in absolute misery on account thereof. And, on the other hand, a condemned conscience, or soul accusing itself for sin and guiltiness, may find some respite, while in the body, from different circumstances, either from such as worldly riches, or by means of company to assuage its misery; but when once the soul comes to be separated from, stript, or dislodged of the body, its state then becomes perfect, either in happiness or misery. But though then perfect in whatever state, whether of happiness or misery, yet not without increase in either.

JUD. But if there be no locality or distinct place, such as express of heaven and of hell, How then comes it to pass that hell in scripture is sometimes called a burning lake, and oft-times express by the word hell-fire; and at other times unquenchable fire, or the fire that shall never be quenched?

GEN. Are either of these expressions to be taken up or understood in a literal sense, as if hell consisted of material fire, such as streams of brimstone, and the like, such as generally supposed by the populace, the ignorant, and unthinking croud? No. As fire or burning are intolerable to endure, the agony of the mind being likewise intolerable, is only compared thereto in a metaphorical sense; and is never once intended to be understood in a literal sense: for as fire being an element, it can ne-

ver possibly be felt, but only by elementary or corporeal substances.

From hence, it follows, that fire can never possibly be felt but by animal life, which is the inhabitant of animal substance. Hence, since fire cannot be felt but by animal nature, the pains of hell can never possibly proceed from that element—No.

Further, it is said, that the wicked shall be cast or turned into hell, where they shall be tormented with the devil and his angels. Hence, it is, therefore, evident, that if fire or burning were the cause of torment, misery, or pain, devils, since not possessors of animal substance, *viz.* bodies, could never possibly feel it, nor be hurt by the influence or power thereof. Now, if material fire has no influence or power upon spirit or spiritual beings, that which they understand for hell, in which they suppose the malignant part of the human race will be tormented, could never possibly be a hell or place of torment to punish and torment devils or damned spirits—No: for spirits may just, with as much safety, pass through a globe of intense heat, or world of fire, and feel no harm, as through empty space itself. For spirit is only as thought, but distinct from matter; therefore, can neither feel nor be felt, except invested with an operative power. Now, if the punishment of wicked men in a future state consists of material fire, according to you Mr. Judaizer, and that spirit, as is evident from the above, can never possibly be either hurt, punished, or tormented by the

influence of that element, What then becomes of that, with other passages, where it is said, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and be tormented with the devil and his angels?" Must all these passages go for naught? If what is meant by hell consist of material fire, they certainly must.

Further, nor is it to be supposed that heaven (because it is said, that "The Lamb shall lead them unto fountains of living water; and that God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and also, that they shall drink of the rivers of pleasure, and the like") is to be understood in such a sense, as to mean a locality or place—No: we are not to suppose that these, and the like, are to be taken up in a literal, but in a figurative sense: for the whole book of Revelation, from the beginning throughout, means only the church militant, and not triumphant.

Hence, and to proceed, we are not to suppose that God is a local or limited being, circumscribed to place, according to the received opinion of an ignorant world, such as the Jews—No: for all space is his temple, and he himself is the inhabitant thereof. For God is an infinite and uncircumscribed being; and as God is infinite, he, therefore, necessarily requires an infinite space, wherein he may act and display himself, by the great and wonderful works he hath called into being; which consist of so many great and magnificent systems of worlds, all revolving round their re-

spective centers in rapid motion, though each thereof in a more or less degree, according to their different distances, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, invariably keeping the paths prescribed them; and these worlds peopled with myriads of intelligent beings, formed for endless perfection and felicity.

Now, as God is of universal dominion, and pervades every point of wide and immense space, he can never, therefore, be supposed to be circumscribed to a local heaven, according to the vulgar opinion received by the credulous and unthinking croud; for God is a spirit, and there is nothing but a spirit can possibly enjoy or partake of that happiness that is to be found in, and proceeds from God, to such as those whose desire is to conform, obey, and live agreeable to his divine will.

Hence, does it not, therefore, appear evident from the above, that heaven is not to be understood to consist of a place, but of a state of happiness and progressive felicity?

JUD. If it is only spirit that can enjoy God, or is capable of being punished in a future state, for sinning against him when in this life, to admit thereof does not only take from the complete happiness of the just, but would likewise abate from the punishment of the wicked.

GEN. In answer to your objection, as it is only the rational soul that can either be acquitted or condemned, rewarded or punished, it is, therefore, only the spirit that is capable of being either happy or miserable.

Hence, it is only the spirit, or soul of man, that either condemns or acquits, for the actions done in the body. And it is only the spirit acting, as in the above, that makes either heaven or hell; for the nature or situation of the place can never, independent of its inhabitants, make either the righteous or the wicked, either happy or miserable. For proof thereof, if a wicked person was subjected to live in the society of the righteous in heaven, thus, by changing its society, it would be worse there-to than hell itself (*viz.* a condemned conscience): for the wicked are, no doubt, more happy, and their wickedness or sin, which is the cause of their misery, is more increased when in company together.

Further, have we not heard how the righteous, when tormented by the wicked, have, when suffering in the flames, expressed themselves in hallelujahs of praise and acclamations of joy? All of which prove, that happiness and misery, *viz.* heaven and hell, at least what is generally understood by these two expressions, consist not of place or locality, but of the state or circumstance of the mind; which we may justly suppose confirmed at death, or separation of soul and body: the state of each, being then unchangeably fixed, is that which completes the happiness of the one, and misery of the other, which, in real speaking, is that which is understood by the words, heaven and hell. For the soul or spirit that enjoys God is consummately happy (which is heaven), in whatever point of space it exists; but, on

the other hand, the wicked and condemned spirit, is miserable, or in hell, in whatever point of space it exists in: for if there should be two or whatever number of spirits in company together in one place, if the one part thereof is happy, and the other miserable, by reason of conscience acquitting the one, and accusing or condemning the other, the one is thereby actually in what they call heaven, and the other in hell, though all in company together.

Further, in proof against the doctrine of a locality, according to the received opinion of heaven and hell, shewing that it is only the state of the mind that can possibly make the being either happy or miserable. Hence, though numbers of mankind have, from a distractedness of spirit, most inhumanly destroyed themselves, was ever such a thing known to proceed from the distress of the body, exclusive of the mind? No, I apprehend not; except from a delirium brought on by the oppression or stress of trouble; and from an inward disorder of spirit, or distress of mind, which, of all others, no doubt, is the most intolerable and worst to endure: for there is no place whatever, can possibly give rest to a distracted or troubled mind; for it is said, "A wounded spirit, who can bear?"

Now, from this, it appears evident, that the happiness or misery of a future state, consists not of place or locality, as generally understood by the populace, or greatest part of mankind, but only of the state of the mind or

spirit, whether it consists of happiness or misery: for whatever part of space the soul is in that enjoys God, whether it be by itself, alone, or in company with others, as observed in the above, it is happy or in heaven; and also the wicked, in whatever part of the aforesaid, *viz.* space, the condemned, or self-accused soul exists, whether in company with others, or by itself alone, it is miserable and in hell; which is only the state of the mind or spirit itself, from a consciousness of its guilt, and not of the body.

From hence, we may infer, that the two different states of the unseen world, *viz.* heaven and hell, is as follows. When a just and upright person comes to be removed from this present life, it being then got above temptation, affliction, or distress, of whatever kind; so that by its having nothing to bear it down, embarrass, or oppress it, it then becomes perfectly happy, without interruption.

Hence, as with the just, similar thereto does it fare with the wicked, while they continue in the probationary state of this life: they oft-times have many different comforts from both means, and from company, to solace, give ease, and bear up the self-accusations of a condemned conscience; but so soon as removed beyond death, or period of this present life, being then deprived of all these consolations, they become utterly miserable, without intermission.

Hence, and to proceed, it is, therefore, evident, from the above, it is only the com-

pleteness of either of these two different states, that constitutes, or makes what they call heaven and hell.

Lastly, Before I conclude this subject concerning the nature and situation of what is generally meant of heaven and hell, on which so many different volumes have been wrote, I shall, therefore, just barely observe, but as brief as possible, some of the various opinions delivered on both. Heaven, or what is commonly taken for the place of the blessed, as has been generally understood by the ancients, and also by the moderns, is always supposed to be on high, or what they call above; and that hell, or what is taken for the place of the damned, is beneath. Hence, this opinion was founded upon a notion, that the earth was fixed, stedfast, and unmoveable; and from this, they concluded, that hell, the place of punishment, was below, where the wicked are said to be shut up with devils, in utter darkness together; and that heaven, the place of happiness, is above, where the righteous are said to enjoy God, in company with holy angels, in one glorious society together. This doctrine was first invented in the early ages of the world, in time of ignorance, when people were lying under thick or gross darkness; but is now understood in a different sense: for as there being neither high nor low in space, independent of matter, the earth revolving round its axis, both heaven and hell would, therefore, be perpetually shifting, and thereby changing their locality, and be in one ano-

ther's places twice in twenty-four hours, or in the space of one natural day.

From hence, the ancients, both Jews and Gentiles, through their gross ignorance, formed to themselves a great many different heavens; some three, others seven; the Nosticks eight; some twenty-three, others thirty; some thirty-three, others forty-seven, and others seventy; and others again, three hundred and sixty-five, with their proper and peculiar angels; and also, that the angels of the lower or last heaven (being the starry one, *viz.* that which is visible to us), created this inferior world, with all the different inhabitants thereof; above which they imagined was the heaven of heavens, or place of the blessed, *viz.* angels and souls of good men; in which place they supposed was the abode of the Deity, not knowing that all space is no more than sufficient for his temple, wherein is contained so many different systems, and worlds without number, designed by God as places of commodious habitations, for creatures endued with rational capacities, capable of knowing and adoring their great and beneficent Creator. And thus, according to what notions they formed to themselves of heaven, the like also did they of hell; some held it to be in the center of the earth, others in the air; some in one or other of the planets; and other some in one or other of the comets; and others in the sun; and yet, though divided in opinion concerning the place, they all believed in a locality. These, with different others, are

the different opinions they have formed concerning the locality of heaven and hell. These notions being, therefore, most suitable to the populace and unthinking croud, and as having delivered my opinion that there is no locality of either heaven or hell, whoever thinks otherwise may judge for themselves.

JUD. But though we all believe a future state, it is still attended with an uncertainty.

GEN. Though doubts thereof remain with us, such doubts ought by no means to be encouraged, lest they come to be attended with bad consequences. For a life spent in the belief of a future state, the desire and expectation thereof is, that they may not only be rewarded, answerable to their actions and behaviour in this present life, but may likewise enjoy God for ever.

Hence, and though there was no future state, a life spent in expectation thereof, can meet with no loss, but much benefit, both in health and length of days, which is the effect of a sober, regular, and well spent life; when, on the contrary, a life spent in debauchery, destroys the constitution, impairs the health, torments the conscience while in life, and oft-times cuts short the period of a long promised continuance therein.

DIALOGUE V.

Of the Nature of Angels.

JUD. **H**AVING ended our last, but not without satisfaction, and as you have not refused to grant my request hitherto, there is one thing further, on which I would ask your opinion, and is as follows; *viz.* the nature of angels.

GEN. In answer to your request concerning the nature of angels, is on what I shall not be too prolix; it being a subject, which, as I apprehend, needs no long disquisition, to explain or unfold its meaning. That there are angels, some good and others bad, is what, according to the received opinion, I verily believe: but that these angels are invested with unlimited powers, either as to their actions, knowledge, or government, is of what I have no such idea. But that these supposed messengers of the heavenly hosts await their orders, and execute their commissions on whatever embassy they are sent, is what, according to the above, there is no room left for us to doubt.

Further, as touching the nature of angels, if we admit of such beings, we may justly suppose of their being not self-existent, but created spirits; but that they were created independent of matter, or the inhabitants of

corporeal bodies, such as our own, is not so easy for us to determine: but one thing we may, therefore, be certain of, that in whatever state, they were certainly created probationers.

Hence, there is an opinion that I myself have long entertained, and do not think it undeserving of credit, that angels are the probationers of past worlds, and have underwent a probationary state, such as we ourselves, is not without some authority. For proof of which, see Rev. xix. 10. "And I fell at his feet to worship him: and he said unto me, See thou do it not; I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God: for the testimony of Jesus, is the spirit of prophecy." Chap. xxii. 8, 9. "And I, John, saw these things, and heard them. And, when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which shewed me these things. Then said he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book. Worship God."

Hence, whether these were angels sent on commission to the prophets, or whether they were the spirits of the prophets, it is hard for us to determine. Some, indeed, have thought they were, and others that they were not; but whether they were or were not, one thing is certain, they all underwent a probationary state: for it is certainly necessary, that all such

as are to inherit an endless felicity in the enjoyment of God, should undergo a probationary state.

What I have here observed, and exprest in the above, is the opinion I have long adopted concerning angels; and however far it may be right, let each, after the perusal of the above sentiments, judge for themselves: for I require the belief thereof of no person, any farther than he thinks right, and agrees with those of his own sentiments, after being digested by mature deliberation.

But further, as to the origin of these imaginary beings, *viz.* angels, the opinions thereon, being so much divided, it is, therefore, somewhat hard to determine; but shall observe as follows. Some of which imagine of these fictitious beings, *viz.* angels, being created of fire; others of their being the daughters of God; and others, of their being a kind of inferior gods: but the accounts thereof being so trifling, scarce deserve our attention. As to the reality of these fictitious beings, *viz.* angels, is what we know little or nothing of. Angels, indeed, are beings which have been long talked of; but the original account thereof, depends altogether upon the authority of the Persian Magi (being the first that spoke of these beings, and) from whom it was diffused into Chaldea, and there adopted by the Jews, during the time of their captivity or stay in Babylon; where they were taught to believe, that each of these beings had a certain district appointed them, according to their different

stations, in the government of the various provinces of that empire.

JUD. If angels were unknown to the Jews, and they ignorant thereof until their captivity in Babylon, how comes it to pass of Abraham, of Jacob, and others, having conversed therewith, long before that period?

GEN. Let any person but read the last chapter of 2 Chron. with different other parts of said history, and he will find, from various circumstances recorded therein, of what they call the Old Testament, including Judaism, with all its different traditions, having been wrote after their captivity in Babylon, and not before.

Further, with respect to angels, they are generally supposed to consist of two different classes, one good, and another bad; *viz.* angels of light, and angels of darkness: and as the church is sometimes called the kingdom of heaven, and at other times the kingdom of God; and as they that are overseers in the different districts of said church, are called angels (as exprest of the seven Asiatic churches), these we may suppose, as in the above. Such, therefore, as hold the gospel in righteousness, conformable to the natural and moral attributes of God, are the good angels; and those who hold it contrary, in making each of these moral attributes contradict and thereby confound another, are what they call angels of darkness, *viz.* devils, whose name is legion; because they are many. Conformable to the above, we are likewise told, that wicked men,

in a future state, will be tormented by devils; from which we may infer, that the doctrines wherein men are taught and instructed by these angels of darkness, in contradistinction to the moral attributes of God, in setting them at enmity one against another, is what will torment them, along with their other vices, in horror of conscience, and thereby gnaw their tongues for pain, and anguish of soul, in remembrance thereof.

DIALOGUE VI.

Of the Origin of Languages.

JUD. **H**AVING ended our last, of which I have had no small satisfaction, there is also another subject, on which I would ask your opinion; and is what they call the confusion of tongues, or division of languages.

GEN. As to what you ask on this topic, concerning the different languages, or division of tongues, the reason, I apprehend, of such a variety of speech among the nations, is as follows. Although there should have been but one language in the world at first, it is easy to account for the many others that have taken place. For instance, I shall, for illustration, therefore suppose, of two, three, or more, in a family in the world at first; each thereof being acquainted with as many different objects as the small circle of their knowledge would admit

of; and that appellations were given by them to each of these different objects, to distinguish them from one another. And if the different persons, in said family, should have set out from their then present abode, in order to separate their habitations, and thereby give room to each other; and as they spread abroad farther and farther, progressively, from one another, according to the extent of distance to which they were removed, so would the variety of objects be multiplied, which would still require new appellations to be given to each of these new additional objects, on purpose to distinguish them from those with whom they were formerly acquainted. And the farther these different persons came to be separated and removed from one another, so much more would their communication be lost with, or to each other.

Hence, this being the case, it would therefore, thoroughly prevent the knowledge of the new appellations given to each thereof, to such objects as they had discovered, since they had dwelt together: for not one of these different persons, when their communication was lost, could possibly acquaint another of the new appellations given to such objects as had been discovered since they had been dispersed abroad from each other.

From hence, it follows, that as every different appellation being new that was given to so many different new objects, this is what gave rise to new languages; and thereby accounts for all the different languages in the world, just

as much as if both men and women had been created (as possibly they were) in all the different parts of the world at once.

What is here exprest in the above, may suffice to inform all such who have reserved to themselves the use of these natural powers, or freedom of judgment, they possess from God, how and from what cause all the different languages in the world took place at first amongst men.

DIALOGUE VII.

Whether one Pair or more of human Creatures was Created at First.

JUD. **H**AVING ended our last, and being favoured with your sentiments on these different subjects, upon which you have already treated, there is one still remains, on which I would wish to have your opinion, and is as follows; namely, Whether there was one, two, or more human creatures created at once?

GEN. In answer to what you desire of me in the above query, whether of there being one, two, or more persons created at once, it is a subject not to be determined without consideration, as may be understood from the sequel.

From hence, when God created man, Is it ever said in that account, that he created only one male and no more? No: for when exprest

of his having made man, it is there said that he gave them dominion over the creatures.

From hence it follows, the word 'them', which is plural, agrees with the word 'man' which is also plural. Now, since the word 'man' is plural, we may just, in every respect, as well suppose numbers thereof to have been made at once, on the different quarters and parts of the globe, as of one single person: this is no capricious fancy, since all things were created at the full for the supply of life.

From hence, when God created man, he therefore, no doubt, gave being to numbers of human species on different parts of the globe, as well as to those of the animal tribes:—this is no vain hypothesis, but is even pregnant with demonstration itself, from the various species of men that are found on almost all different quarters of the globe. Hence, nor is the distinction of which species circumscribed to a difference in complexion or colour of these various species, but is even extended to the modes of their existence, not only of body, but also the features and cover that is natural to the head. The natural colour of the Europeans is white; and as for the Asiatics, part thereof are white, and others black; and as to the Africans, they again are generally black; and the Americans, from north to south, are of an olive or copper colour.

Hence, various reasons have been assigned for all these different complexions or colours of mankind, in order to evade the truth, of each of these different complexions being the

original colour in which the various species thereof were created at first. But, for the better understanding of this subject, I shall add as follows. The hair of the Asiatic blacks is generally straight; but the features of such, though black, are much the same with those of white people: but the hair on the head of the African blacks is all, to a man, of a short shorling dress, and almost as hard as a bristle, with a short round face, thick lips, a flat nose, and their shoulders thick and round: both hair and features of that people differing from almost the whole human race. The reason assigned by some for the Africans being of a black complexion, is their being situated upon the Torrid Zone; so that, by reason of the excessive heat, and nature of the soil, they imagine that they are become black; but if heat, or nature of soil, was the cause thereof, How comes it to pass that on the other side of the river from Negro-land, the people or natives of that country are almost, in every respect, as white as other people, who inhabit the same degree of latitudes?

From hence, we see that the blacks in the East Indies, who live on the same latitudes, with or amongst white people, are perfectly black; while others thereof are white.

Now, having thus far considered some of the capital reasons given for blacks, I shall, therefore, turn to the other side of the Atlantic, to those, namely the Americans, who are all of an olive or copper colour, altogether

different in complexion from almost every other part of the globe but themselves alone. And the reason assigned for said colour is, that they paint themselves; and by reason thereof are now become of the same colour of the paint used by them for that purpose. But will ever painting change nature, or turn it into a different channel than what was first intended by Almighty God? No, not possible. For painting is what can never possibly be procreated, nor conveyed by generation to posterity by the established laws of nature—No, not possible.

And further, and to this we may add, that if the Americans have acquired this copper colour by painting, we may, in every respect, just as well suppose that all different colours of the human race are from, or the effects of painting, the same as the Americans; and thereby reduce the first of the creation to no colour at all, which would be absurd. But to proceed,

We are credibly informed from history, that different quarters of the globe produce different colours of people. For instance, those of the Brazil country are of a reddish complexion, brownish skin, are of a middle stature, and have big heads, and large shoulders. The Persians again are said to be of a tawny or olive colour, and usually of a middle size. And others in some of the Isles adjoining to the coast of Asia, are said to be of a copper colour. In short, men are said to be of almost all different colours, on various parts of the

globe; which is a demonstration of the variety of colours in which people have been created at first. For instance, the Hottentots, who live nigh to, and about the Cape of Good Hope, are said to be of an olive colour, provided by nature with something resembling an apron hanging down from under the navel, of both men and women, which covers their nakedness. And also, there is also a people in Africa, who are said to be excessive white, but small in stature, and also in intellects, whose hair is exceeding white, but short, and fine as wool. There is likewise a people in South America, which are said to be of a reddish colour, red eyes, and, like the owl, see best at night, or in the dark; living in holes or caverns through the day; never coming abroad but in the night. The difference betwixt the blacks or negroes in Africa and white people, is as follows. The membrane, which lies like a net-work betwixt the muscles and the skin, when carefully taken off or from betwixt the muscles and the skin, is excessive black in those of negroes or blacks, but perfectly white in those of white people: consequently, all of which is expressly from nature, and not produced by the climate or painting, as vainly imagined by the ignorant and unthinking croud. Of different species and colours of mankind being created at first, certainly appears beyond dispute from the above; and as to Monsieur Buffon, and others, who have wrote in favours of the world being peopled

from one single pair, *viz.* Adam and Eve, and of all mankind having descended therefrom, is so trifling and absurd in its nature, that it scarce deserves an answer: for they may just, in every respect, as well assert that every particular world in space, was peopled from said pair; which is impossible, as appears evident from the above. The one thereof is no more absurd than the other—No; nor could Buffon have lost himself more in writing upon any one subject, however fictitious, than in favours of the above—No, not possible.

JUD. But though we should admit of people to have been created on different parts of the globe at first, they would all have been entirely cut off by the flood or great deluge, whereby the earth was drowned when laid under water.

GEN. I know, indeed, we have an account of a flood recorded in the book of Genesis, which is gathered from the tradition of the fathers; but though a flood should have happened on one part of the globe, that is no sufficient reason for us to believe of its having gone over all the surface of the earth, and to have drowned the whole of its inhabitants—No.

JUD. But does not the history of Genesis tell us, that all the hills under the whole heaven were covered; and that the water was fifteen cubits above the highest hills; and that every living creature was drowned?

GEN. Did the man they call Noah, know either the Alps, the peak of Teneriff, or of the

Andes in America, such as to tell us their height, and of the water being fifteen cubits above the top thereof? Places, I apprehend, he did not so much as know that they existed upon the globe. But no calculation, though the subject thereof never existed, is too great to be recorded in an oriental or Jewish romance.

Hence, what was taken for heaven in these early ages of the world, was only above one hemisphere: for the earth was supposed, by its then inhabitants, to be founded upon the waters; and the surface thereof level or flat like a round table; and what was below its visible surface they called hell.

The above is what was the received opinion of the ancients; but though there had been such a flood as supposed, that the waters thereof, were either fifteen cubits, or yet one cubit, above the highest hill or mountain of the earth, is what neither Noah, nor any other person, had it in their power to know: for though one were to sound the depth of such an ocean, and find it fifteen cubits, he could not know of there being no place of said ocean shallower; neither was he capable to inspect its surface. And though in his power to have inspected the surface of the globe, and should thereby have made a calculation, by observing what time the rains began to cease, till the mountain tops began to appear, by observing the time required in abating from its height; yet from the first appearance thereof, he knew nothing but what both the rains, and supposed

ed cause of the increase of the waters from the globe, might have been continued part of said time upon the opposite hemisphere, and surface thereof. And besides all this, before this subject be ended, the history of the flood, and that every living creature on the face of the earth was drowned, and cut off therefrom by a deluge of water, will perhaps be found as much wanting, and lame in its calculation, as the other.

The first thing necessary to be considered in this inundation, is the supposed cause of the deluge. The ancients, as observed elsewhere, formed unto themselves a great many different ideal or imaginary heavens. First of all was the firmament or starry heaven, the pavement of which they supposed to consist of some one kind or other of crystalline substance, in form of a concave glass, wherein they imagined the stars were fixed, like to as many studs or brass nails, sparkling like so many diamonds from on high; above which was the first heaven, an apartment, as they supposed, which consisted of waters; the second they supposed to consist of fire, and so on. This first heaven which they imagined to consist of water, they supposed that God opened what they call the doors and windows thereof, and let fall from thence to the earth the waters which caused the deluge, along with these waters, on which they vainly imagined the earth was founded; the fountains thereof being opened, did spring and issue forth from the great deep.

Hence, but how vain is the supposition to

imagine, as in the above, of waters having descended from the lower or starry heaven to this our globe of earth, when a cannon bullet (not to speak of water) could not as yet have reached our world from thence, even since the creation itself (according to the date thereof received by us), let be four thousand years ago. But, to proceed,

And from these imaginary causes, they, from ignorance, believed the world to have been drowned: but as these feigned causes were void of the very least, or smallest foundation, so may we suppose the effect also. And for to imagine, that a long continuation of rain from the clouds that swim in the atmosphere, would add, or cause the great ocean to swell, and thereby drown and overflow the earth; they may just, in every respect, as well suppose, that by lifting water from out of a large vessel, when not half or third full, and that by pouring the said water back thereinto, it will become not only full, but run over, as to believe that the rain distilled from the clouds, or vapours exhaled from the great ocean, will add to the increase of waters which are in the sea.

Hence, alterations, indeed, may take place from natural causes, such as earthquakes or convulsions in the globe, in such a manner as to make parts of the dry land to become lakes of water; or may raise the earth that is covered by the sea above the surface thereof, that it become dry land; but that the waters

thereof will cover the whole surface of the globe, is impossible.

Further, when it was said that the whole world was covered and drowned by a flood, we may just, in every respect, as well believe that when, as exprest in the evangelists, that all the world was taxed, which meant only the Roman empire, which comprehended only a part of Europe, with part of the lesser Asia (exclusive of either the greater Asia, *viz.* Tary, Persia, India, China, with the isles belonging thereto, with Africa, and also America, that all these were taxed; though the far greatest part thereof, the Roman empire never knew), as to believe that all the world was drowned by a flood.

It being, therefore, now evident, from what has been exprest in the above, that the world was never destroyed by a flood; though some part, from an extraordinary emergency or convulsion in nature, may have undergone an inundation. From this, we may, therefore, suppose, of neither man nor beast having been cut off from the earth by a flood; but that the different generations thereof have ever been continued from one to another, without interruption, since God created or gave being thereto in their first formation.

Having, therefore, considered the history of there having been only one human pair created, and of the flood, whereby the world is said to have been destroyed, and having laid down my objections advanced against them and the belief thereof, I shall here lay down

another, or second objection, against the world, viz. all the different nations of the earth, having descended from one human pair, either before or after the flood; which is as follows, viz. the peopling of America.

Hence, if there had been none but Adam and Eve in the beginning before the flood, and none but Noah and his family after the flood, How, or by what means, did the peopling of America take place?

JUD. We know not, but that before the flood, some part of the continent of America and Africa, may have been joined together, and peopled from thence.

GEN. But though we should admit of this to have been the case, that Africa and America were joined together before the flood, and America peopled from thence, Would they not have been all cut off together at the flood? Most certainly.

JUD. But what if there should be some communication from Asia to America, and America peopled from thence?

GEN. If there was such a thing as a communication betwixt Asia and America, How comes that communication to be lost? If such a thing as a passage had really been, it would have certainly become still more and more public, by reason of their perpetually coming and going to each other.

JUD. But though there should be no communication betwixt America and any other quarter of the globe, might not that continent have been peopled by navigation?

GEN. Navigation being of such a late discovery, there is not the smallest probability of its having been peopled by navigation: for no shipping whatever, in ancient times (such as in these early ages of the world), from want of navigation, durst attempt to sail beyond sight of land, but always in a coasting manner.

JUD. But might not some ship or vessel, by reason of having lost her course by storm, or other accidents, have been driven to sea, and by length of time, have fallen at last on some place or other of America; and thereby it might be people from some one or other part of our continent.

GEN. Though this should have been the case, that America was peopled, as in the above, Is it possible that ever mankind would have degenerated into so many different kinds of brutes as are found upon the continent of America, and isles thereof? No, certainly not.

JUD. Might not there have been different kinds of beasts taken on board, on purpose to have transported them to some other different coast, and might unfortunately have been driven off, as in the above?

GEN. Though this had chanced to have been the case, Is it possible that ever people, in their right wits, would have been so mad as to have taken on board so many different kinds of rapacious animals, not only destructive to themselves alone, but also to all the rest of the simple and useful species of the brutal

creation? No, not possible: for it is well known, that America, when first discovered, was inhabited and abounded with as many different tribes of animals, as any other quarter of the globe; many of which species found on no part of the globe itself. And since found in no other part of the world but in America, is an incontestable evidence, and puts the subject entirely beyond dispute, of its being peopled from no other quarter of the globe, but were all created thereon at first: and if created thereon, as is evident from the above, would, in express words, be a downright insult upon the understandings of men, and judgments of the whole human race to require a contrary belief. And since unanswerable, as in the foregoing, therefore, can never possibly be understood to have been peopled, as has been alledged in the above supposition.

JUD. As to my argument of the inhabitants of said quarter of the globe, with respect to the brutal tribes being transported thither at first by navigation, that I frankly give up; and thereby acknowledge, that the origin of said animals, must, certainly, have been created thereon, when it received its existence from God.

GEN. If the brutal tribes were created thereon, Why not the rational, the same as they? If the brutal tribes were created thereon, as they certainly were, this, no doubt, carries the highest degree of demonstration, that no flood ever took place on that quarter

of the globe, as to have destroyed its inhabitants. From whence your Jewish fabulous hypothesis, received from that most ignorant race of men, of a flood, and of the world having been drowned thereby, and of its having been peopled at first from one single pair, must, therefore, all go for naught, as being nothing more than a downright insult upon the senses and understandings of men.

Further, Is it not astonishing to see the ignorance and folly of mankind, in believing of three quarters of the globe, and not only three, but even also America, being peopled from one single pair, *viz.* one male, and one female, when almost all nature teaches us the contrary?

Hence, Does not reason assure us, that the Americans may, therefore, in every respect, just as well affirm, and thereby assert, that Asia, Africa, and Europe, had their origin from America, and were peopled from that quarter of the globe, as you, Judaizer, with others, have to believe of the Americans being descended from Adam: the one assertion is, in every degree, just as valid and practicable as the other; and has, in every respect, as good a right to maintain that we are descended from them, as we have to believe of their being descended from us.

Having thus proved the absurdity of the world being destroyed by a flood, according to the received opinion, it puts an end to the fabulous doctrine of a conflagration built thereon, of its being reserved to be burnt or

destroyed by a reverse element (from that of water), *viz.* fire, as vainly imagined by the ancients, who dwelt on mere fiction, not being capable, from their want of knowledge, to understand the nature of things. Hence, is it not strange to see men taking their knowledge from children, in place of men of experience, *viz.* those of riper years!

JUD. But there are some different ceremonies said to be used among the natives of America, which are supposed to resemble those in use among the Jews, or Abramic race; such as circumcision and the like: which they imagine is a proof of the natives of America being descended from the ten tribes, and of its having been peopled from Asia.

GEN. If I, for instance, should see a person, from a delirium, walking with a burden of useless lumber to which he had long inured himself to carry; and if I should see another person, in a distant country, walking about after the same manner, with such another burden of lumber, both of size and quality with the former, Am I to suppose of his being descended from the other person I saw elsewhere in a distant country? No, certainly not: for if I do, I thereby shew myself to be just as great a fool, as either of the other two.

Hence, though a person should circumcise himself, either out of a desire to gratify his lust, or for the sake of propagation, or as in way of punishment upon that part of the body for some act of uncleanness, or for whatever cause, and then give out that God command-

ed it; and then, in order to perpetuate his brutish superstition to posterity, he binds his descendents to the performance of said rite, which, from ignorance, they sustain as appointed of God, Will this all the while give it a right to have come from God? No, certainly not. Now, though another person, in a distant nation, should have, from the same frenzy or disease, behaved, as in the above, and laid the same kind of injunctions upon his posterity to be observed, though only a badge of his folly, does that frolic make those in the one nation to have descended from the other? No, certainly not.

Further, a case similar to the above circumstance being, a person, in our own neighbourhood, who, in a fit of madness cut off part of that which I do not think proper to name. Now, if you saw one in another nation (who, from the same kind of delirium or degree of madness), wanting part of what, as in the above, are you to believe him to be the same person, or of his posterity, as in the foregoing? No, certainly not.

But further, in speaking of ceremony, *viz.* that of circumcision, I shall observe as follows. It is reported by different authors of great note, among whom is Sir John Marsham and others, who do not doubt that the Jews took the most of their ceremonies from the Egyptians; and it is the established opinion of several ancient authors, that the Jews received the rite of circumcision from the Pagans. Herodotus says, that the Colcheans, the Egyptians,

the Ethiopians, the Phenicians, the Persians, the Arabians, with different others, and such of the Syrians as lived in Palestine, acknowledge, that they, *viz.* the Jews, borrowed this ceremony, with various others, from the Egyptians. Diodorus Siculus says much the same with Herodotus. And also, Philo, a Jewish author, and consequently of great authority with regard to the Jewish customs, seems to authorize the opinion of these Pagan Authors. They ridicule, says he, circumcision, as practised by our ancestors, though it has been esteemed by other nations, and particularly by the Egyptians, who excel all the nations in the universe for their multitude and wisdom. These proofs are, no doubt, sufficiently strong as to the use of circumcision among the Egyptians, before it was practised by the Jews; and yet the latter pretend, that they received it from Abraham, who was immediately enjoined it by God. This opinion is received by almost all the modern divines. The above is the opinion, not only of several ancient heathen authors, but is likewise confirmed by the prophet Jeremiah, Chap. ix. 25. who reckons the Egyptians the first of the circumcised nations.

From hence, it, therefore, appears evident, that the Jews only borrowed this rite of circumcision, with different others, from the Egyptians; though they pretend of having received it from Abraham. But whether this ceremony was borrowed by Abraham from the Egyptians, when in that country, or by his

posterity when living therein, I shall not positively say, but one thing is certain, be the case thereof as it will, it was a very easy matter with the priests, to make the people believe of its being instituted by God to Abraham, as a pledge of the land of Canaan, to inspire them with victory in conquering that people. But to proceed,

How grovelling, how odious, and ridiculous, do men appear, and thereby expose themselves in the sight of God, angels, and men, in believing of God having required such an abominable or obscene command, as that of circumcision? or that he ever did, or ever will, require of his creatures, so much as any one thing unlike himself? No, he never possibly will. Hence, what horrid presumption is it for men, to even any such thing to God, such as having created man with more than what is necessary, and behoved to be cut off!

Further, a like circumstance, is that of Abraham, Gen. xxii. where it is said, that God tempted him to offer up his son Isaac, a burnt-offering; but, to the contrary of God having tempted Abraham to perform any such black or unlawful action, the apostle James tells us expressly, that "God tempteth no man; but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed."

Hence, a very unlikely story, indeed! that an old man of an hundred and twenty-five years of age, or upwards, should have had the assurance to take and bind a young man of twenty-five, in the prime of strength, in

order to cut his throat for a burnt-offering, not to speak of God requiring Abraham, as in the above, being a precedent for human sacrifices, like those of the heathen nations, which, no doubt, would have given sanction thereto. And besides all this, we may just as well believe, that God required of Isaac to cut the throat of his father, and there offer him up unto the Lord for a burnt-offering; the one appears, in every respect, just as absurd and unlawful as the other. If it had been said that the devil tempted Abraham to offer up his son for a burnt-offering, it might, no doubt, have gained more credit, than of his being tempted thereto by God. But, to return,

From hence, it appears evident, that tho' some different rites and ceremonies in one nation, may resemble those of another nation, it makes no proof of their being descended from the people of said nation—No, it does not: for the same species of creatures in every nation, are subject to the same species of frolics of another; and commonly produce effects resembling the other; therefore, no evidence of the natives of America being descended either from Jews, or any other nation in either Asia, Europe, or Africa. But the colour of that people from pole to pole, being different from those on almost every other quarter of the globe, is not only a demonstration, but even puts it beyond dispute, of their not being descended from any other nation, but were created by God, in said quarter of the

world, in which they now are. And to reason, or answer such as would assert the contrary, is much the same as to reason with a person when raving through the grates of bedlam: for the one is, in every respect, just as far below a person of judgment to reason with, as the other; because such jargon deserves no manner of answer being made thereto. As in the above, so does it chance in different places of the world. For instance, Where is the nation, that whatever circumstances takes place therein, but what oft-times something similar taketh place in another? This is what has made people greatly mistake many things which they imagine were predicted concerning the Messiah, and other particulars of like nature. Whatever unfortunate circumstances, such persons are recorded as speaking of, either concerning themselves or others, if any thing similar thereto befel Jesus Christ, or others relative to said case, it was therefore accounted, with such as are incapable to understand, to be prophesied of him, or of them to which they are fond to apply it. But, to return,

It being, therefore, now evident, from what has been exprest on this subject, that there were people created (to what number we know not) on different parts of the globe at once; and that the world was never destroyed by a flood of water, as has been related to us in different histories, both from what is called sacred and profane, built upon, or extracted from what they call sacred.

Hence, as the Jews, from their first original, were a dark, cloudy, superstitious, and bigoted people, nothing could possibly have been so gross or absurd, either in tradition, mystery, or miracle, but what they were always ready to believe, and swallow down for truth. Though Job, a man almost emerged from out of gross darkness, verging towards sublime knowledge (though unjustly accused by his three friends, and also corrected by Elihu, personating the Almighty), told them, that the earth was hinged on nothing; they fully believed (as exprest by them in different places of their records), even through their dark and brutish ignorance, contrary to what was exprest by Job, that the earth, as unmoveable, was founded upon the waters, or what they imagined to be the great abyss or unfathomable depth; not knowing that in its annual course, of its going round the sun once a-year, exclusive of its diurnal motion, which it completes in revolving round its own axis in the space of each twenty-four hours. Now, if we were to take our knowledge from such a system, and thereby receive and establish the gross ideas and conceptions of that superstitious, enthusiastic, and bigoted people, for infallible truths, this would be no less than to replace and receive falsehoods for facts, and make ignorance and fable, the standard and test of sublime knowledge.

Hence, different other additional proofs might be given in favours of this subject, but what has been thus briefly exprest, may suffice

to convince the candid and unprejudiced reader; and it is altogether vain to reason with such who shut up themselves from light, and are become proof against conviction, like those of the stubborn, ignorant, and stiff-necked Jews.

Further, having, therefore, gone over these different subjects at your request, there remains another still, upon which I shall only glance a little. The subject of which I am to take notice is as follows; namely, whether or not God took up six days in creating the world, and the things which therein are (according to the traditional account recorded in Genesis, and received by the Jews for truth, and others of the same belief of that people), or did he create all things at once?

JUD. The writer of that book tells us in his history of the creation, that God took six days in his creating of heaven and earth, and the things that are therein.

GEN. But from whom had the historian, or writer thereof, this account? Or what authority does the writer of that history avouch for it, that we should believe it?

JUD. Was it not revealed to him by God?

GEN. If it was revealed to him by God, it is what neither the writer himself saith, nor is there one syllable in either the Old or New Testament, that maketh mention of it.

JUD. But though an account of the creation has not been revealed to the writer thereof, might he not have had it from the fathers by tradition?

GEN. It is well known by every person of judgment, that the account given thereof, by the writer of said history, is from nothing else than tradition: and though he should have had it by tradition, as possibly he might, what respect can possibly be paid to a tradition, communicated, or as it were handed down from one generation to another, for near the space of betwixt three and four thousand years, when a certain fact, if repeated by, perhaps, twenty, or whatever number of persons, one after another, within the space of one day, will be told not only in different words, but under as many different meanings, though in less than in the space of one day, let be three, or near four thousand years? Hence, but though it had been possible for the writer of said history to have had the account thereof by tradition from Adam, as in the above, if Adam was only created on the sixth day, as related to us by the writer of that book, How, or by what means, could he know the number of how many days were past before he was made, and what was done on each thereof, when he himself was only created after the whole was completed? But, he does not only tell us of what was made on each of the other five days, but he even pretends to tell us what God said when he was about to make himself, *viz.* Adam, before he had so much as received his existence from him: for he gives, in every respect, as distinct an account thereof, as if he himself had been made on

the first day, and present at what was performed on all the other five.

JUD. But might not God have told Adam what was done on each of the six days?

GEN. That God told Adam what was done or made on each day, we have not one syllable of authority, from neither the Old, nor yet from the New Testament, more than from the writer of said book; but only what is said to have past after he, *viz.* Adam, was created; which, I apprehend, is much of the same credit with the former.

Further, it is exprest in the beginning of that history, "God created the heavens and the earth;" and then it is said, "He created the light," *viz.* that which he called day; after he had created the heavens and the earth; and then again, it is exprest, elsewhere, "God created all things in the space of six days;" which is a downright contradiction to what is there exprest in the above: for if the heavens and the earth, which are the greatest part of the creation, were created before the first day existed, they could never possibly have been created a second time, namely, within the space or limits of six days.

JUD. But it is said, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Now, I apprehend, the word "beginning" admits of their being created not before, but within the space of the six days.

GEN. No: it says, that "The earth was without form, and void; and that darkness was upon the face of the deep; and that

“ the Spirit of God moved upon the face of
“ the waters;” which declares exprefsly, that
light or day was entirely the produce or effect
of a future action in creation, according to
that historian. But, to proceed,

Hence, after the writer of that history speaks
of God having created the heavens and the
earth, he, *viz.* God, faid, “ Let there be light;
“ and there was light. And the evening and
“ the morning were the first day.” And then
he tells us further what was created. “ And
“ the evening and the morning were the fe-
“ cond day.” And then again he tells us
what was created additional to the former.
“ And the evening and the morning were the
“ third day.” And then he tells us further,
that “ God created two great lights. And the
“ evening and the morning were the fourth
“ day.” Now, if the fun, which is the foun-
tain of light, was not created till after the
third day, from whence came the light of the
three preceding days? If we believe that there
was a day without a fun, this is to believe that
the effect not only preceded the cause, but that
an effect can exift without a cause; which is
not only a downright contradiction of terms,
but is altogether impossible in the nature of
things.

Further, it has been alledged by some, that
fince light exifted before the fun, that the faid
light, though uncollected together, would be
the cause of day. Thus far, I acknowledge,
that if light exifted before what is called the
fun, and was circumscribed or gathered to-

gether unto one place, this certainly behoved to be the sun. But if light was scattered throughout space, as alledged by some, and not collected together into one place or body called the sun, there could have been no night, but a perpetual blaze of day, undivided by the darkness of night: for, as light being an antidote against darkness, there could no night possibly exist in the presence of light; for light is the cause of day; and the absence thereof is the cause of night: for the latter, *viz.* day, is the effect of the former, *viz.* light, and not the former of the latter. Now, if the writer of that tradition had said that Adam was created upon the first day, it had certainly been of more weight, and would have accounted better for what was done, according to the historian, upon each of the six days; because he might have seen, and, therefore, have been an evidence of the different operations of each day. And it might also have been supposed, that the first day (but though the first to him, could not say that there were none before it) which was light, as he imagined, without the sun; which, if not appearing, or having been seen by Adam, was only by reason of the disordered vapours in the new atmosphere, obscuring the sun from his sight for the space of the three first days, till once the confused jumble of nature began to subside, and vapours expelled from betwixt the sun (whose existence he then knew not of) and the earth.

If this had been the case, as in the above, of his having been created in the morning of

the first day, he might thereby have been supposed capable to have given a better, or more distinct account of what was done and performed, in the operations of each day. And though there had been thousands of mankind created at once, if not together in one place, Adam, according to the foregoing, could by no means have known of any other person being created but he himself. And although the woman, called Eve, had been created within a few yards of himself, each thereof, by wandering differently, might have been several days, by reason of the vapours, before they could either find or discover each other. And as Adam perhaps being then at rest, Eve might then, by chance, have unknowingly stepped towards him in his repose; so that, when he came to be awakened, he might thereby suppose her to be one with himself, or taken from out of him when asleep: for though repose was necessary for his refreshment, he, at first, could not be acquainted with it; therefore, would certainly appear strange unto him, when first seized therewith.

From hence, if the writer of that history had set forth his account of the creation, and of man's being created upon the first day, in place of the sixth, as exprest in the foregoing, it had certainly given more credit to his tradition, after being put on record; and would have accounted better, according to the small circle of Adam's experience in knowledge: for the sun and moon being made at first,

though only beginning to appear through the thin or transparent vapours, as the sky began to clear and become serene on the fourth day (and the moon in the evening thereof), as observed in the above; and also of his not knowing of Eve, or of any other person being created but himself alone, and that whatever objects he discovered on either of the six days, he might have imagined of their being created on the day in which he discovered them; but of this the historian came entirely short in what he has recorded, as related to us. Hence, but the account given thereof by said writer, is much the same with the fabulous traditions of creation, of Adam's behaviour in paradise, genealogies, and of the flood talked of by some of the different nations, before ever the writer thereof existed.

Further, but the Jews were a people who gave themselves up to fiction, and who delighted greatly in fabulous traditions, and in the marvellous; things, indeed, more fit for the entertainment of fools, and amusing the ignorant part of mankind, than for instructing them in useful knowledge; yet, nevertheless, the particulars of the Jewish history, however absurd, remain as authentic in the annals of that people unto this day. But the fabulous traditions of any people or nation whatever, which depend only upon contradictions for their authority in what they profess, and sustain for truth, are not worth being depended upon, and far less to be trusted to as the foundation of all true religion, wherein men

are to repose and rest the salvation of their never dying souls. But, to proceed,

Hence, the account of creation, related by that historian, being so palpably gross that nothing can scarcely exceed or be compared with it. Hence, in the first place, we are told, Gen. i. (as observed in the above) verses 1, 2. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." And then we are told further, verse 3. "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light."

Hence, in the first verse, we are there told that God created the heaven and the earth. Thus heaven and earth were created, according to said historian, before that ever light which is called day, had received its existence from God. For in the second verse, we are told, that "The earth was without form and void; and that darkness was upon the face of the deep; and that the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." All of which, *viz.* the creation of both heaven and earth, has therefore pre-existed, according to said writer, prior to the existence of light or first-day: for he says expressly in verse third, "And God said, Let there be light; and there was light," *viz.* that which is called day. Further, and then to the contrary we are told, elsewhere, that "The Lord in six days made hea-

ven and earth, and all that in them is ;” but is it possible that heaven and earth could exist prior to light, and yet be created after, within the space of six days? No; neither is it possible for all the creatures he has made, yea the powers of darkness not excepted, to devise a greater contradiction than the above. And also (of the light) of three days having pre-existed before the sun, which is the sole cause of day, or light thereof. From hence, even the Alcoran itself, the gross of which, though only composed from a collection of bulls, yea, the whole thereof, when accumulated together, and summed up in one, is incomparably short of either of these two contradictions. And that God created heaven and earth, before that either day or night existed; and that he made heaven and earth, and all things therein in the space of six days, after they were created, is such a palpable contradiction, that to ascribe the authority thereof to the just and true God, is, therefore, no less than the grossest of blasphemy; and is even more than what all the creatures he has made can possibly reconcile, without making Almighty God, a God of contradiction, which is a thing altogether simply impossible; because a God of contradiction, is no God at all.

Hence, we are taught in said history, Numb. xxiii. 19. first clause, that “ God is not man “ that he should lie.” And likewise, 1 Sam. xv. 29. first clause, “ And also, the Strength “ of Israel will not lie.” Now, if God created heaven and earth, as exprest in the above,

before ever either day or night existed, and then after to have created them within the limits or space of six days, for which they ascribe his authority; this is no less than representing God to lie, and thereby contradict and confound himself, which is impossible.

From hence, the various lies and contradictions, of which Judaism is composed and pregnant with, would not only bring Christianity, but even Paganism, if blended therewith, unto perpetual disgrace.

Hence, is it not most astonishing, of people being so grossly ignorant as to admit in being imposed upon, to believe in a catalogue of such horrid trumpery, set forth as under the sanction of divine truth? A most shocking circumstance, indeed! For to believe that God either commanded or requires a belief in contradictions, is to believe that his kingdom is divided, and therefore at an end, as exprest by Jesus Christ, when accused by the pharisees. With respect to such vanities of which Judaism is composed, and relied on for truth, as the foundation of our religion, Would not one be astonished to see people, at mature age, taking their laws, for the regulation of life, from mere children, incapable to judge betwixt right and wrong? However astonishing the above may appear, it is still more astonishing to see mankind, in such an enlightened age, taking their religion from either the Jews or Gentiles, at a period when nothing but ignorance and barbarism were to be found in the world.

Hence, would it not be thought strange if we should take not only our laws, but our religion, from the wild Indians of America? Be this as it will, the other is no better—No, it is not.

But further, and to return, the priests or clergy, in order to keep up their importance, do actually require of the people a belief in all these things. But, to require a belief in such contradictions having come from God, is no less than a high insult upon the understandings or judgments of his rational creatures; and it is even almost altogether incredible that ever men could either admit or give credit to such contradictions, though not to speak thereof as being divine.

Hence, for men to believe of God in such a monstrous and disgraceful light, as represented and believed of by Jews, and such christians by whom that obnoxious system, *viz.* Judaism, has been most impiously ingrafted on the gospel of Christ (and believe therein), would certainly act more honourably towards the Deity to believe there was no God at all, than believe that he acts in contradiction to himself, as in the above.

From hence, I would to God that many who pretend to be christians, were but as wise and equal to Balaam: for if the eyes of such were but just as open as Balaam's, when in company with Balak, they could not but perceive of their being almost altogether ignorant of God; and of the gospel of Christ, from notions they have most presumptuously formed thereof. But alas! such are in a worse

and more dishonourable state than Balaam: for his eyes were open and saw, wherein theirs are blind in rejecting that which is set before them.

But further, no person can possibly either admit, believe, or give credit thereto as sacred or divine truth, if not a mere buffoon for the amusement of children, and others altogether ignorant of God.

JUD. Am I a buffoon?

GEN. And every one who impiously holds that wherein God is positively set forth, and made appear as to contradict and thereby confound himself. In short, it is with what no person can possibly take part, without explicitly declaring himself against God, and in favours of the devil—No, he never possibly can: for he that ascribes God's authority for that wherein he is represented as to contradict and thereby confound himself, is actually against him; but a good man will never possibly allude the authority of an unblamable character for that which implies contradictions—No, he never possibly will.

JUD. I am now almost altogether persuaded from the justness of your reasoning, to adopt your opinion; which, I apprehend, is founded upon the strongest basis of divine truth: and which, no doubt, will induce many to believe therein. Yet, however just and indisputable your arguments are, though many should be induced therefrom to believe, some will not.

GEN. That I verily believe: for men are generally more happy in folly, and bound up

in that on which they set their fancy, though nothing therein, than others are in the most sublime truths. But it is not truth for which men strive and contend for in matters of religion—No; it is only that which is of ancient date to which they have been accustomed, though nothing more false, absurd, and inconsistent with God.

And further, but not to insist thereon, I shall, in corroboration with what is here expressed in the above, recite a short extract from the learned Dr. Middleton's examination of the bishop of London's discourses, concerning the use and intent of prophecy, which is as follows.

“ Thus the plantation of a paradise for the
“ habitation of man, the tree of life, and the
“ tree of knowledge of good and evil in
“ the midst of it, the expulsion of him out
“ of it after his fall, the cherubim and
“ flaming sword placed as a guard to it,
“ God coming down to walk in it in the cool
“ of the day, Adam hiding himself among the
“ trees from the sight of God, the discourse
“ of the serpent, and curse pronounced upon
“ him by God, and upon the ground also itself,
“ must all be considered as a mere eastern fable,
“ from which no other lesson or doctrine can
“ possibly be inferred, than what I have already
“ intimated, that this world was created by
“ God, and that man was happy as long as
“ he continued in it; but forfeited his happiness,
“ and became wretched and miserable,
“ as soon as he became a wilful and habitual
“ sinner: this, I say, is the whole which we

“ can rationally collect from the Mosaic ac-
“ count of the fall. But, to draw divine and
“ literal prophecies out of mere fable, and to
“ treat it as the support of all religion in the
“ Antediluvian world, and the foundation of
“ all the prophetic evidence which the christi-
“ an religion has to depend upon, is more
“ likely to weaken, than to confirm the autho-
“ rity of christianity ; and deserves rather to
“ be ranked among the dreams of visionaries
“ and enthusiasts, than considered as the sug-
“ gestion of sober sense and reason.”

Further, and to proceed, How astonishing is it to see people so grossly ignorant in a world of light, such as to build their religion upon the fabulous traditions of brutish ignorance, and upon the fantastical dreams of men, at a period when scarce capable to distinguish the shadow from the substance, or themselves from the brutal tribes? Hence, in a word, for priests to require of people to believe and embrace such groundless, idle, and stupid reveries for truth, they, in a word, do not only suppress, but actually shut up the avenues of divine knowledge ; and thereby sacrifice the day or blaze of meridian light, to black or midnight darkness itself. To this, I dare not, upon conscience, avoid adding to the above, that whatever doctrines are founded thereon (*viz.* the above contradictions, and fantastical reveries of like nature added thereto), whether wrote by Paul or Apollos, to soften and take off the prejudice of that ignorant and superstitious race, are not to be depended upon for

truth—No. Yea, I repeat it again, that whatever doctrines (such as in the Romans, and likewise the Hebrews) have been politically wrote, whether by Paul or by Apollos, in order to soften and take off the prejudice of that ignorant and superstitious people (if founded thereon), are by no means to be depended upon for truth—No.

Hence, let us, therefore, not envy those who give place to such gross conceptions of the true God, but rather let us give thanks for our deliverance, and bewail the misfortune of those who willingly despise knowledge, and circumscribe the freedom thereof, unto the ignorance and gross darkness of such as had only heard that there is a God, but ignorant of what he really is.

But further, is it not even astonishing, that millions of millions of rational beings, endued by God with faculties capable to discern betwixt truth and falsehood, should, like fools, admit of being duped out of their judgments, and imposed upon to such a degree as to believe, like ninnies, the romantic story of Adam and Eve, her being made of a rib taken from his side when a-sleep; and also their being tempted of the devil to eat fruit, and thereby subjected not only themselves, but the whole human race, to death and inevitable damnation? And all, too, upon the gross fiction of a mere Jewish fable, by far too worthless and insignificant either as to be received, believed, or repeated by children, and far less by those of riper years.

Hence, the fabulous nostrums collected together, and relied on by that ignorant people, the Jews, and others as fond and happy in being deceived as themselves, are almost without end. A specimen of which is gathered from their annals, as recorded by Isaac Ambrose, of fifteen wonderful prodigies, which, according to them, shall take place before the day of judgment. In each day is annexed thereto a prodigy; but these prodigies, so much like that people, are in appearance so grossly absurd, that it is even below any person who pays the smallest respect for truth, either to particularize or repeat them. And yet, after all, how happy, yea, thrice happy, are fools in taking themselves up in repeating their absurd nonsense. From hence, Is it not astonishing, as observed in the foregoing, of men being so wofully ignorant as to believe in such notorious falsehoods for truth? And also, in building the gospel on such horrid contradictions, as if depending thereon for its authority, is enough to shake the foundation, and bring the best religion under heaven, the gospel not excepted, to disgrace.

And further, I shall just barely take notice of another fictitious account, and belief therein, *viz.* the creation or beginning of all things. The Jews, from what they have gathered from others, would make it nigh six thousand years; others seven, and others eight thousand; but the Egyptian account of the creation, is thirty-eight thousand years, and upwards: and the

Chinese gave an account of their having observed the stars four hundred and seventy thousand years. But the time of its beginning, and end thereof, is what no persons can give an account of, without exposing their folly.

Lastly, and to conclude this Dialogue, I cannot upon justice but observe, that such as believe in the above trumpery, recorded in the history of that people, *viz.* the Jews, have, therefore, no room to accuse Mahometans for believing in the absurd reveries of the Alcoran—No. Thus, I repeat it again, that whoever admit thereof as truth, *viz.* the above trumpery, have, therefore, no reason to accuse the Mahometans for believing in their Alcoran—No: for there is nothing more absurd in the Koran, than those which are contained in Judaism or Jewish history.

From hence, therefore, let Christians, *viz.* both Roman Catholic and Protestant priests, with such as adhere thereto, first cast out the beam out of their own eye, *viz.* the beam of contradiction from out of the religion they profess, namely, that of Judaism, from out of the gospel of Christ, before they accuse and condemn Mahometans for the reveries of theirs. Hence, let them first cast out the beam thereof from out of their own eye, as in the above, and then they will see clearly how to teach, and in what manner they are to instruct others in the will of God.

Further, but the great merit of Judaism, as well as Mahometanism in all ages, is to believe

falsehood and deceit; and the grosser falsehood and deceit they are capable to believe therein, the greater degree of merit is supposed to consist in its belief. Nor is this circumscribed to Jews and Mahometans alone—No: for most of those they call Christian, lay the same stress of merit thereon, *viz.* in believing the same contradictions and impossibilities with the other. And this, namely, to believe steadfastly in whatever is required of them, as in the above, is what all these three denominations call orthodoxy. And by this they imagine, they have not only a right, but can, in virtue of which, thereby demand of heaven to receive them upon their being removed from this present life.

From hence, I have, therefore, already not only made it evident, but have fully proved all these things, before God, angels, and men, only a mere groundless tradition, founded on nothing else under heaven than upon gross fiction; and for this cause, you, and such as adhere thereto, accuse me:—But, as Jesus Christ said to the Jews, Am I your enemy, because I have told you the truth, and nothing but the truth? But in this, and this alone, I rejoice; because God is truth, and the truth will make me free.

JUD. As to the above contradictions, God is sovereign and of unlimited power; therefore, may command one thing to day, and a contrary to-morrow; and in all this, who can say unto him, What doest thou?

GEN. Is God changeable?

JUD. No, he is not: for he says, Mal. iii. 6. "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore, ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Now, it is only because he is God, that he changeth not.

GEN. You have certainly answered well; but have therein perfectly contradicted yourself; because, if God is unchangeable, as he certainly is, he can never possibly contradict himself, such as to command one thing to-day, and a contrary to-morrow—No: for if he did, he was changeable; therefore, according to your own acknowledgment, no more God. But you, like many other perfidious wretches, would have God to contradict, and thereby confound himself, in order to favour your absurd opinions, that you may thereby impose upon the simple, the ignorant, and unthinking croud: for if God, because sovereign, was such a one as to command one thing to-day, and a contrary to-morrow, as represented by such jugglers, it would be altogether absurd to apply the word unchangeable to him, when even changeable every moment.

Hence, it is, therefore, not only well, but wisely observed by a certain renowned author, saying, "Who is more unjust than he who deviseth a lie against God?"—And he that ascribeth God's authority for doctrines wherein God is represented as contradictory to himself, is, in reality, he that deviseth a lie against God: for a God that is changeable, is no God at all.

From hence, it follows, that all such as pa-

tronize, or preach up Judaism, or the fabulous traditions of that people, are muslems or mussulmen, with a witness. Let none, therefore, who pretend to preach Christ, metamorphose themselves into Jewish muslems or mussulmen: for whatever such may (in deceiving themselves and others) pretend to, they, for certain, are not Christians; but are, in every respect, as real muslems, as those who explain and preach up Mahometanism, *viz.* the Koran: for the one system is, in every respect, just as vague, and has as little foundation from truth as the other: for neither of these fictitious records, *viz.* the Jewish and Turkish Alcorans, though both set forth under the name and authority of the true God, have the smallest foundation of truth; but only the traditions of mere fiction and pretended revelation, either to build or rest upon.

Having exprest myself, as in the above, thousands, I apprehend, on purging the gospel of the many gross and unprofitable superstitious adulterations, ingrafted thereon by priests, will, no doubt, imagine I have taken away the most useful and essential part of their religion; but these, like beasts of burden, are only they who tacitly submit to whatever is imposed thereon by self-interested and designing men (though ever so false), in the name of divine truth.

JUD. I am, therefore, no longer able to resist your arguments—No: for reason obliges me to submit; yet, however much justice you have upon your side, I am afraid the priests

will certainly condemn your sentiments, and make the laity believe of you being in an error.

GEN.* If they can, consonant with reason and justice, answer my arguments in such a manner as are conformable to the moral attributes of God, and condemn my sentiments from thence, believe them; but, if they cannot answer them conformable thereto, they, instead of condemning me, thereby condemn themselves. And if you believe them independent of the above test, you thereby deceive your own souls.

THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE,

BOOK VIII.

DIALOGUE I.

Of Trinity and Unity.

GENTILE CHRISTIAN having expunged the gospel of Judaism, and every other innovation invented by priests, ingrafted thereon, by ignorant, false, deceitful, self-interested, and designing men, was, therefore, lookt upon, by all different denominations, as being singular in his opinion. But yet, when each thereof were employed in issuing out volleys of inevitable damnation, in condemning and in anathematizing one another for holding sentiments different from their own, Gentile Christian, though disapproved of all, from an almost unlimited charity in disposition towards all, would not usurp God's authority in judging of any, but left the whole

thereof to Almighty God, whose province it was, and to whom judgment belongs, and who knows best in what manner to judge therein. And though Gentile Christian being accused of all who condemned one another, as in the above; yet he, from an agreeable disposition, and unlimited charity for every sect, was of free access to, and beloved by all: and to whom also all different sects (though not without fear) resorted, in a more or less degree, in order to see and reason with him. Among which sects chanced to meet two great opposites or opponents, *viz.* Messrs. Unitarian and Trinitarian, who, in time of conversation, began as it were to smell and understand one another, which gave rise to the following dialogue.

These two antagonists could scarce have kept company, had it not been from the good nature and advice of Gentile Christian, who studied to reconcile both. Hence, they, in speaking of the gospel system, the subject to which the discourse led was of Christ's station, quality, and pedigree: and upon these they were divided in sentiment; the one holding of Christ being equal with God, and the other that he was not. Thus Trinitarian said, If Christ was not equal with God, Why was he spoke of as God?

Unitarian, In answer to Trinitarian's objection, said, as observed by Christ to the Jews, John x. 34. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are Gods." And likewise Exod. vii. 1. "And the Lord said unto Mo-

“ses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh; and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet.” And also, as exprest, Deut. x. 17. “For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward.” And likewise, as exprest elsewhere, “There be gods many and lords many.” Why, then, are rulers called gods?

TRIN. Because of government.

UNIT. Yes: even so is Christ, by the government they have ascribed to him.

TRIN. But Christ is called the Son of God.

UNIT. Yes; and so is Adam; and not only Adam, but the sons of the whole human race, if not defacing his image, are called sons of God.

TRIN. But are all the sons of men sons of God, in an equal degree with Christ?

UNIT. No: they all, as rational creatures, are; but as Christ being endued with more than an ordinary capacity, and invested with an extraordinary commission to declare the will of God to men, is, therefore the Son of God in a higher degree, and in a more extraordinary manner than they.

TRIN. Yes: they are all stiled sons of God; but though each thereof are called sons, not one of whom is exprest under the character of the beloved or begotten Son of God, but Christ himself.

UNIT. Yes: he is, no doubt, called his beloved Son, by way of eminence and distincti-

on, as in Matth. xvii. 5. and also the begotten, and sometimes the only begotten Son of God; but that he is spoke of as begotten, alludes only to his resurrection, viz. of his being raised again from the dead, as is evident from the following texts, Rev. i. 5. and first clause thereof, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead." Acts xiii. 33. "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." See also, Rom. i. 4. "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead." These, with different other texts, wherein Christ is exprest as being the only begotten Son of God, are with reference to the second Psalm, an allusion to David in his being raised from one of low degree, to the throne of Israel. Verse 7. latter clause, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee." "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee," is not to be understood as being prophetic of Christ—No; but only as in speaking concerning David, of his being raised as in the above.

Hence, I know the above text has oft-times been referred to, as being prophetic of Christ, though speaking only of David, as in the foregoing.

TRIN. Though each of these should come short in proving Christ the Son of God, and

therefore equal with him, Does not that of his birth and pedigree, as traced up of both Matth, and Luke, according to the holy prophets, and his mother being with child of the Holy Spirit, prove his being God?

UNIT. Of Christ being of the seed of David, according to the prophets, as traced up by Matthew and Luke (the one of which, *viz.* Matthew, as observed elsewhere, traces up Joseph's descent from one branch of David's family, and Luke from another branch thereof, distinct from that by Matthew), and of his mother being with child of the Holy Spirit (not to speak of the angel sent unto Mary, being what they call Gabriel, according to Luke, who writes only upon hearsay, or at second hand), is so contradictive, and contrary to reason, that no person in his right wits can possibly, according to justice, admit thereof as truth.

From hence it follows, that if Mary was with child of the Holy Spirit, and not of Joseph her husband, Why does Matthew and Luke trace up Joseph's pedigree, in order to prove Christ being of the seed of David? Hence, I am, therefore, under a necessity from the God of truth, to detect every deceit or false argument used in support of truth; as if God stood in need of our speaking falsely in his behalf —No, he does not; for it is perhaps the greatest disgrace that truth can possibly meet with, to be supported by falsehood or deceit: for if Christ was not literally the son of Joseph, all the prophecies of his being made of the seed

of David, must, therefore, unavoidably cease and go for naught.

TRIN. But Christ may have been of the line or seed of David by Mary his mother (according to the prophets), though not by Joseph his supposed father.

UNIT. As to Mary his mother being understood therein, the history of the genealogies has not the smallest reference to any such account; for both Matthew and Luke trace up the line of Joseph, independent of Mary; and if either of which meant the tracing up the female line, they had certainly traced up the descent from Mary, independent of Joseph: and also, if Mary had been meant in the genealogies, to what purpose was the tracing up of Joseph's pedigree? which, no doubt, does not only overturn your argument, but renders it altogether lighter than vanity.

Hence, of Luke having traced up Christ's pedigree through Mary's line to David, in order to prove her being of the lineage of that family, is what is never so much as meant by the historian—No; or Joseph had never been exprest therein—No, he certainly never had: nor is it ever told of what tribe Mary was of; nor, as observed elsewhere, can any proof be made thereof—No, they cannot. But a farther account of the genealogies and pedigree of said family, may be seen in Dial. 4. of Book III. Vol. 3. page 28.

Further, nor is this all—No: for if Christ was not begot by Joseph, he could never possibly be his son.

TRIN. Though Christ was not begot by Joseph, he may be called his son by adoption.

UNIT. No; but if Christ was not begot by Joseph, which is said to be of David's line, he could never possibly have been of the seed of David, as prophesied of by such who spake of him as a temporal prince.

From hence it follows, there is certainly nothing more evident under heaven, than what they call prophecy. Of Christ having been made of the seed of David, must either, therefore, go for naught as falsehood and deceit; or he, *viz.* Christ, of necessity, must have been begotten of Joseph.

From hence, and to proceed, it is, therefore, now evident, that if Christ was of David's line, as traced up, or rather what we may say traced back, from Joseph, through the different genealogies, he certainly behoved to have been begot by Joseph; and if unbegotten as reported to us, therefore, is not of the seed of David, as exprest thereof, according to that which was predicted of him: for that Christ was unbegotten, and yet of the seed of David, as traced up from Joseph thro' the genealogies, is a downright contradiction, if not an insult upon the judgments, and understanding faculties of men.

TRIN. But Christ, though not known of Mary being of David's line, or of what tribe descended from, yet she, by a natural consequence of every family being blended with another in marriage, may be said to be of Da-

vid's line, and Christ by the mother to be of David's seed.

UNIT. A far fetch, indeed; but renders your argument so vague, that it scarce deserves an answer: for you may, upon the same basis, as well assert of his being of the seed of Saul, of Eglon king of Moab, of Ham, Pharaoh, or of Balack, to whom there is no reference, as to David.

TRIN. If Christ be not, as observed therein, Why then do the apostles refer to the prophets?

UNIT. They only do when speaking to the Jews, in order that they may thereby soften and take off their prejudices; but to the Gentiles, they never do. But, to proceed,

Having, therefore, delineated the circumstance as it really stands, of Christ, as represented to us, having been the unbegotten, and of his being made of the seed of David, according to the prophets; and of one evangelist setting him forth as having descended from one branch of David's family, and a second of his having descended from another or different branch thereof: from which, it is just as possible to reconcile fire and water, heat and cold, light and darkness together, as to reconcile either of these with another: for nature can, in every respect, just as soon exist independent of God, as Christ could be unbegotten, according to the above reference; or yet be of the seed of David, as traced up thereto through Joseph, and he not be his son—No; nor is one syllable of the genealo-

gies, nor of the miraculous conception, nor of the shepherds and angels, which we are told of by Luke, exprest by John, who is said to have been the beloved disciple—No; nor of the star that is said to have appeared in the east; nor of the wise men which are said to have come from the east to worship the babe, viz. Jesus when an infant—No; nor of his being tempted by the devil; nor of Herod's murdering the young children in Bethlehem, according to that which we have recorded by Matthew.

TRIN. These things having been exprest by Matthew and Luke, has prevented John from speaking thereof.

UNIT. That is what I apprehend deserves no credit: for which cause, can by no means admit thereof as truth—No: for if John had either heard or known of any of these things, though Matthew and Luke spake thereof, he certainly would have given some slight hint, and thereby apologized for his not insisting thereon, by reason of the other two having wrote thereof before him; which, no doubt, would have been a corroborating proof in confirmation of the whole; but of these things he gives not the smallest account—No. But, to return,

Hence, and to proceed, it is, therefore, ten thousand pities that ever such a palpable mistake should have been ingrafted on the gospel, or applied to support the character of one who has taught us such a glorious system, which is certainly the will of God.

What has been exprest in the foregoing, may, therefore, teach us the fallibility of both prophets and apostles, in what they are said to have wrote and conveyed to us for our instruction.

TRIN. But Christ, in his reasoning with the Jews, tells them, as follows; John vi. that he came down from heaven, verse 38. "For
" I came down from heaven, not to do mine
" own will, but the will of him that sent me." And also, verse 62. compared with chap. iii. 13. "What and if ye shall see the son of man
" ascend up where he was before? And no
" man hath ascended up to heaven, but he
" that came down from heaven, even the son
" of man, which is in heaven." Further, see also chap. viii. 42. "Jesus said unto them, If
" God were your Father, ye would love me;
" for I proceeded forth and came from God;
" neither came I of myself, but he sent me." And likewise, verse 58. "Jesus said unto them,
" Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before A-
" braham was, I am." To these we may add, Chap. xvii. 5. "And now, O Father,
" glorify thou me with thine own self, with
" the glory which I had with thee before the
" world was."

Now, since Christ came down from heaven, as in the above, Can any person refuse of his being God?

UNIT. Is it not said of angels, when sent on an embassy to this world, that they came down from heaven?

TRIN. Yes.

UNIT. Do angels, by descending from heaven, make them gods?

TRIN. No, it by no means does?

UNIT. Neither is Christ, though descended from heaven, a proof of his being God—No.

TRIN. But it is exprest in the above, that he proceeded and came forth from God: Now, since he came from God, Is not this an incontestable proof of his being God?

UNIT. Did not the whole creation come from God?

TRIN. Yes.

UNIT. If the above test be a proof of Christ being God, it will even prove the whole creation, as coming from God; gods also. Besides all this, the very expression of Christ coming from God, is an incontestable evidence of Christ not being God: for God can never possibly come from himself—No: for the words “come from,” always imply that that which is come from is left behind: for if not left behind, it can never possibly be exprest from, but the thing itself brought along. And to say that God, from whom he came, was left, and that Christ that was sent by him was God, this, in express words, is the establishing a doctrine of two distinct gods; which is a downright contradiction to the text which is exprest by Christ, that he was sent, and came not of himself.

The text, therefore, of Christ coming from God, implies his personating that divine wis-

dom which was communicated to him in such an abundant manner from God, that he might thereby declare his will, for the good and salvation of men. And as concerning the above text, "Father glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was," is sometimes understood to signify as follows; "Which I had laid up for me with thee," by the foreknowledge and predetermination of God, "before the world was."

But further, and to proceed, as God is infinite, and cannot be limited or circumscribed to place, his province is to pervade or fill wide and immense space: now, that which fills all, can never be said to come from one place and leave another empty—No, not possible. Hence, but that Christ came down from heaven (which means a state of happiness), and was sent of God, proves his being a finite and dependent being: for it is only the prerogative of a superior to send, but of an inferior to be sent: for the lesser is always subject not to an equal, and is also directed by the greater; and not the greater by the lesser, or one that is equal, if it be not upon an embassy that exceeds the power of him that sends to effect: for that he was before Abraham, means not that he was God—No; but only of his being invested with that divine wisdom, communicated to him without measure for the good of men; and this is what is said to have been prior to Abraham, and to have come down from heaven.

Hence, another such account is there recorded in Prov. viii. 22—32. “The Lord
“ possessed me” *viz.* wisdom “in the be-
“ ginning of his way, before his works of
“ old. I” wisdom, “was set up from ever-
“ lasting, from the beginning, or ever the
“ earth was. When there was no depths I”
wisdom, “was brought forth; when there
“ were no fountains abounding with water.
“ Before the mountains were settled; before
“ the hills was I brought forth: while as yet
“ he” *viz.* God, “had not made the earth,
“ nor the fields, nor the highest part of the
“ dust of the world. When he” *viz.* God,
“ prepared the heavens I” wisdom, “was
“ there; when he set a compass upon the face
“ of the deep: when he established the clouds
“ above: when he strengthened the fountains
“ of the deep: when he” *viz.* God, “gave to
“ the sea his decree, that the waters should
“ not pass his commandment: when he ap-
“ pointed the foundations of the earth: then
“ I” wisdom, “was by him, as one brought
“ up with him; and I” wisdom, “was dai-
“ ly his delight, rejoicing always before him:
“ rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth;
“ and my delights were with the sons of men.”
Thus the writer of the Proverbs, is here speak-
ing of the wisdom of God, by which all things
were created, as exprest elsewhere, “In wis-
dom hast thou made them all.” The above,
viz. wisdom, is likewise alluded to Christ
(though only communicated to) as dwelling in
him.

But though the wisdom of which Christ was possessed, be from God, it is never understood in the above texts of being uncreated, and without beginning—No: for it always speaks therein, as having been produced and brought forth, though existing before all worlds, or creation of all things. To this also agrees that which is in Ecclesiasticus concerning wisdom, Chap. i. 4. “Wisdom hath been created before all things; and the understanding of “prudence from everlasting.” Now, since that wisdom is created, as express’d in Eccles. and also as express’d in the 24, 25. of the above, conformable to said text, where it saith, “I (*viz.* wisdom) was brought forth,” (or before so and so) “was I brought forth,” can never possibly be from eternity—No: and if not from eternity, therefore, cannot possibly be God, nor yet equal to God: for the words, “created or brought forth,” still imply a beginning; but God is from eternity to eternity, and not derived, as in the above, from betwixt the two—No.

But further, what is here called created, or brought forth wisdom, implies merely that which is communicable, and can possibly be communicated from the Supreme to a subordinate, or unto whomsoever he will.

From hence, what is here express’d concerning wisdom, is nothing more than what is perfectly evident from the book of Proverbs, with that of Wisdom, Eccles. and Baruch; by or through which, *viz.* wisdom, all things are supposed to have been made. And when-

ever Christ speaks of his having been with the Father, and of his coming down from heaven, his being before Abraham, and the like, with whatever is referred to, as low as the present period of his life, he is there only personating the divine wisdom that descendeth from God, *viz.* that communicable attribute derived from God, and imparted to him, in such a liberal manner; with which he was invested from on high, to declare his will for the good and salvation of men. But though expressly evident, as in the above, yet altogether misunderstood by such as are incapable to comprehend, know, or understand these things. But true knowledge neither dwells with, nor will attend on superstition, which blinds the understandings of men.

Hence, and thus men, by want of ability to discern betwixt innate and communicated wisdom, have therefore made Christ (contrary to what he himself required) equal to God: For Christ never pretended in all the miracles he performed, of his having wrought them by his own power—No: for he says expressly in John v. 30. “I can of my own self do nothing.” And also, in his answer to the Jews, Chap. vii. 16. “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.”

Hence, both these texts prove his having acted not from an innate power, but from that which was communicated to him of God, in confirmation of what he taught for the good of men.

Now, is it possible that any one thing under heaven, can be more exprefs of Christ not being God, than that of his reply when accused by the Jews, in making himself equal with God? Where, instead of claiming his being either God, or equal to God, he, in exprefs terms, told these superstitious and blood-thirsty gentlemen, the reverse, or exprefs opposite, in that most pathetic answer made thereon to the Jews, Verse 19. first clause, “Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself.” And also, Verse 30. first clause, “I can of mine own self do nothing.” Here Christ, in his refusing the charge of claiming to be either God, or equal to God, returns the answer with a reduplication of the expression; that the Son, whom you Trinitarians call God, can do nothing, *viz.* no miracle of himself, or any thing supernatural, farther than of his being empowered of God to perform, in confirmation of his being endowed therewith from on high, to declare the will of God for the good of men.

From hence, no person can maintain with you, Trinitarians, of Christ being either God equal, or great God, but must, therefore, give him the lie, from what he has exprest in the above.

TRIN. But it appears from the first chapter of said book, *viz.* John, and three first verses thereof, that he was God. Verses 1, 2, 3. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The

“ same was in the beginning with God. All
“ things were made by him ; and without him
“ was not any thing made that was made.”

UNIT. It is to be observed (mark this) that the above is only John's opinion of Christ, set forth on purpose to refute the doctrine of Cerinthus, and the Nicolaitans ; therefore is not to be depended upon as an infallible truth. What is here exprest by John concerning the Word, and operations thereof, on which they have laid so much stress, is merely a phrase borrowed by that apostle from Wisdom, Chap. ix. 1. and Eccles. i. 4. with that of Gen. i. and Psalm xxxiii.; which he, no doubt, thought suitable for confuting the Sect of the Nicolaitans, against whom he wrote. But to proceed;

For no person knew Christ's quality, but he himself. And though what is here delivered by John, be not exprest in the same words, yet it is much of the same meaning with the former, exprest in the foregoing, *viz.* Wisdom, and is as follows. Verse 1. “ In the beginning was the Word,” or rather what we call wisdom, “ and the Word” or what we express by wisdom “ was with God, and the Word,” or rather what may be called wisdom; which was with him in the beginning, before communicated, “ was God.” Verse 2. “ The same” *viz.* wisdom, “ was in the beginning with God.” Verse 3. “ All things were made by him,” or rather through that wisdom, communicated to Christ; “ and without him,” *viz.* that supreme wisdom, which

was communicated to Christ by God, "was not any thing made that was made." Now, what is here exprest in this passage, as observed in the above, is only the opinion of John; a man, no doubt, just as fallible as the rest of the apostles. But let us rather hear what is exprest in the foregoing by Christ himself, "I can of mine own self do nothing." And also, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me."

Hence, Christ tells us here expressly, that the doctrine he taught was not his who was sent, but his only, *viz.* God's, by whom he was sent. Therefore, if not his who was sent, but his alone by whom he was sent, therefore, is not God, according to you Trinitarians.

Further, that Christ, as in the above, was possessed of that communicated wisdom that was with God, and descended from on high, see 1 Cor. i. 24. "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

Hence, but to proceed, one thing, most essential, is here to be remarked, that though what here follows be sometimes exprest by men, *viz.* his apostles, of all things being made or created by him, *viz.* the Son or Sent of God, it is nowhere exprest by Christ himself (who, no doubt, knew ten thousand times more than they all), that any one thing made, was made or created by him—No; not even the most minute particle. And if Christ has nowhere spoke of his having created any one thing, or part of that which was made, not one word exprest thereon by men, beyond what he him-

self has perfectly declared, is to be admitted as valid, or received as truth.

Hence, and if Christ has nowhere exprest himself as to have created or given being to any one thing that is made, I shall, therefore, suppose myself loosed from taking even the smallest notice of any one passage where he is represented by men, as to have created or given being to any one thing that was made.

TRIN. If Christ be not God, What is to become of that which is exprest by Thomas, saying, "My Lord and my God?" Is what is here so pathetically exprest by Thomas to go for naught, as words on which we cannot depend for truth?

UNIT. Was that which is exprest by Thomas any thing more than the words of a man, in every respect, as fallible as yourself? which is evident from John xx. 25. of his refusing to believe only a few minutes before, of Christ being risen from the dead; and believed of his being risen, as exprest in the above, only upon his appearance, which is unrefutable from verse 27, and also 29. "Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed," because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed that I am risen from the dead; without which, thou refusedst to believe: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." The whole of what is here exprest, implies only this, of Christ being risen from the dead; and that, too, by the power of God; but not of his being either God, or equal to God.

Hence, you, Trinitarians, appear, from what you hold, to be of all other people under heaven, the most blind, the most ignorant, and incapable of knowledge: for there is nothing can possibly be so absurd, but what you can believe for truth.

Hence, Is it possible that any thing can be more so, than to believe of Christ being either the infinite God, or equal to God, contrary to what he himself exprest or requires of us to believe? No, not possible; for the whole of what you hold, is expressly this; to disbelieve Christ, and to believe men, rather than he.

But further, the apostles, I acknowledge, may, like honest men, so far as their memories would serve them, and capacities, with that of the Jewish prejudice, would admit (concerning the nature of the Messiah), give us their opinion of Christ; but such palpable mistakes as are relied on for truth, is what the creation itself can never possibly reconcile.

TRIN. To refuse Christ being either God, or equal with God, is in some measure to deny his divinity.

UNIT. The charge is altogether false: for every person that acknowledgeth his, viz. Christ's, being invested with divine authority, and commissioned of God to declare his will, do thereby acknowledge his divinity.

TRIN. But we are to acknowledge him as God: for it is exprest, John v. 23. "That
" all men should honour the Son, even as they
" honour the Father. He that honoureth not
" the Son, honoureth not the Father."

UNIT. Yes: a king, no doubt, requireth that the same degree of honour should be paid to his viceroy or representative, as to himself, in order that his laws may be the more punctually observed in governing his subjects.

Hence, that Christ was God's ambassador, invested with power to instruct and give laws to mankind in declaring to them the will of God; it, therefore, necessarily follows, that whosoever does not honour him that is sent, dishonoureth him that sent him: for it is allowed by all men, that he that dishonoureth an ambassador sent with full power to treat in behalf of his master or sovereign, dishonoureth him whose ambassador he is.

What is here exprest, is the meaning of the above text; and not that he, *viz.* Christ, was either God, or yet desired of being worshipped as God—No; for though Christ tells the Jews of his being from God, he never once says, though commissioned by God to declare his will, that he was God—No, he nowhere does.

TRIN. If Christ be not God, Why then, as observed in the foregoing, is he called his Son?

UNIT. Are the rays of light, which proceed from the sun, the fountain or source thereof?

TRIN. No.

UNIT. If the rays of light, which proceed from that illuminous fountain, are not the source, Why are they called the sun?

TRIN. They are only called the sun, because they proceed from him.

UNIT. But are the rays of light, which proceed from the source or fountain of light, actually the sun?

TRIN. No, they are not the sun; but are only produced by him who is the inexhaustible fountain thereof.

UNIT. If the rays of light are not the sun himself, but are only produced by him; neither is Christ, through that communicated wisdom which was with God before time, though imparted to him, as it were, without measure, from the fountain thereof, God—No: for as the water which proceeds from the fountain is not the source which produced it, nor the rays of light the sun; neither is Christ, through that communicated wisdom, though imparted to him from the fountain thereof, God—No.

TRIN. But we have it exprest, that all things were made by him.

UNIT. Because the rays of light which proceed from the sun, animate and give heat and life to the vegetable world, is he the creator thereof?

TRIN. No, he is only the second cause, and not the first.

UNIT. Neither is Christ, through that communicated wisdom, God, though imparted to him from God, as it were, without measure, the first, but second cause whereby men are made alive through the knowledge of God, manifested to us in the gospel of Christ.

TRIN. But Christ foretold of future events;

therefore, by foretelling what was to come, is certainly a proof of his being God.

UNIT. Do either what they call prophets or apostles, or even others, by foretelling of future events, or things to come, make them Gods?

TRIN. No.

UNIT. Neither is Christ, by foretelling of future events, or things to come, a proof of his being God—No, certainly not; or if perception, as in the above, be a proof of his being God, you will thereby make the prophets, the apostles, and others who foretold of things to come, gods, even as well as he.

TRIN. If foreknowledge is not to be sustained as an evidence of Christ being God, the great miracles which were wrought and performed by him certainly are.

UNIT. If miracles be sustained as a proof of Christ being God, What answer, then, will you make to that text, Matth. xvii. 20. where Christ tells his disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible to you?" See also, Chap. xxi. 21. "If ye have faith" in God, as exprest by Mark, "and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done."

From hence it follows, that if miracles be a proof of Jesus Christ being God, his dis-

ciples, upon the performance of what is there exprest by Christ, must, therefore, have been gods also.

TRIN. But Christ wrought greater miracles than the apostles.

UNIT. Yes; according to the degree of power with which he was endued, superior to them were the miracles he wrought greater than those of his apostles.

TRIN. But Jesus Christ raised the dead to life.

UNIT. Yes; so did him they called Elisha, as reported in the Jewish history, raise the dead to life also.

TRIN. But Jesus Christ raised various persons to life.

UNIT. Yes; but it is reported that the very bones of Elisha, when in the grave, raised up one from the dead to life again.

TRIN. But Jesus Christ exceeded all these; for we are told, Matth. ix. that he forgave sins, and is as follows. Verse 2. he there saith to the sick of the palsy, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

UNIT. Yes: Christ speaks there according to the mission he received from God, and communicated thereof to his disciples. For which see John xx. there Christ, in speaking to his disciples, saith, verse 23. "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Defects or bodily disorders of whatever kind, were always supposed by the Jews (and others to whom they were related,

in the oriental nations), to be the effects or consequences of some one sin or other.

Hence, after which stile Christ there speaks in his healing the man of the palsy; and in this sense it is likewise understood in what he exprest to his disciples.

From hence it follows, if the former be a proof of Christ being God, the latter, in his disciples remitting sins, as in the above, will, therefore, certainly be an evidence of each thereof being gods also.

TRIN. But is not that which is exprest by Christ, Matth. xxviii. 20. and is as follows, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen," a proof of Christ being God?

UNIT. If we are to understand the above in a literal sense, the words exprest here, "Lo I am with you" viz. the apostles "alway, even unto the end of the world," would prove too much; therefore proves nothing at all, namely, that the apostles would never die, but would even live unto the end of the world, or consummation of all things: or, if they died, the world behoved, therefore, to end with them. But, according to commentators, what is here exprest by the end of the world, signifies in the Greek, the end of the then present age (or Jewish state), in which the apostles lived.

TRIN. I apprehend, it rather means his being not only with the apostles, but also with the different generations of their successors to the end of the world.

UNIT. You may just, in every respect, as well suppose, that when Paul, in speaking to the Corinthians, Chap. v. 4, 5. concerning the incestuous person, that when they were gathered together, and his spirit (*viz.* Paul's) was with them, "to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," because that he exprest (as follows), and his spirit was with them, that he was God: for though Christ should have mentioned his being with the apostles and their successors, it only implied, the stability of the doctrines which he had delivered unto them should endure forever; as also, that wisdom, which was communicated to him, should attend the purity of the gospel to the end of the world: as also, does that recorded of Paul, of his spirit being with the Corinthians, &c.

Hence, one thing further deserves our attention, and is as follows. Both Mark and Luke, who wrote upon hearsay, or at second hand, give an account of Christ's ascension; but neither Matthew nor John, who were his disciples, and present with him, make the smallest or least mention thereof—No. Now, Is it possible that such an extraordinary circumstance could have taken place before the whole of his disciples when together, and yet they, in writing a most full and distinct account of all that happened concerning him, should make no mention thereof? No, not possible.

TRIN. But does not Christ, in speaking to

his disciples, tell them, John vi. 62. "What
" and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend
" up where he was before?"

UNIT. The rational spirit which comes from
God, or wisdom communicated to him from
above, might, no doubt, ascend where it was
before; but the animal, which he received
from his mother, and with which the other
mentioned was clothed with or upon, when in
this world, can never be supposed to have
come down from heaven, or to have been
there before—No, certainly not.

TRIN. But it is exprest, Chap. xx. 17.
" Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I
" ascend unto my Father, and your Father;
" and to my God, and your God."

UNIT. But John nowhere saith that he ei-
ther saw him ascend, or heard of his ascension,
or yet speaketh thereof—No, he does not.

Now, since the above is the case, no apolo-
gy can, therefore, be made, or answer given
for it.

Further, to this I shall add, that the wind-
ing up of Matthew, and also of John, appears
not to have been wrote by either; as is evident
from Matth. xxviii. where, instead of being
exprest as in verse 16. " Then the eleven dis-
" ciples went away into Galilee, into a moun-
" tain where Jesus had appointed them," it
would have been exprest thus, Then we, his
disciples, went away into Galilee, into a moun-
tain where Jesus had appointed us. Verse 17.
" And when they saw him they worshipped
" him; but some doubted," Instead, as in

the above, it would have been exprest as follows. And when we saw him, we worshipped him. Instead again, as in verse 18, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven, and "in earth," it would have been exprest as follows. And Jesus came and spake unto us, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. As in the foregoing, so is it exprest in the two last chapters of John, which proves of their not having been wrote by the first person, *viz.* John, or yet the other by Matthew, nor by one of his disciples: for the writers of both speak altogether in the third person: for, instead of being exprest therein (us and we), it is exprest thus, *viz.* they and them; which proves none of either, remarked in the above, to have been wrote by Matthew or John—No.

From hence, it appears, as to the account of Christ's ascension having been visible to the apostles, I much doubt, that the report given thereof is rather too vague to be depended upon for truth: for if such a thing had taken place in presence of his disciples, Is it possible that such a remarkable circumstance would have been passed over by them in silence, without being taken notice of? No, not possible: for neither as reported in Matthew, of the eleven conversing with him, nor yet in John, in the whole of what is exprest in both, is there so much as one word, or even syllable, of any such meaning—No, there is not: for Mark, who writes at second hand, says, in-

deed, that the eleven were present, and that he was received up into heaven, but speaks nothing of its being in their sight—No. But Luke, a man who wrote only upon hearsay, tells us in the last of his evangelist, and also in the first chapter of the Acts; in the one he was parted from them, and in the other, that he was taken up in their sight: of this he speaks, as of many other things on which we, by his recording upon hearsay, can by no means depend. But, to return,

If any thing further remains which you suppose in proof of Christ being God, or according to some, not only equal, but even the supreme God, you will, therefore, be so good as make it appear.

TRIN. Is it possible that any thing can be more expressive of Christ being God, than the above text, Matth. xxviii. 18. where Christ saith to his disciples, after his being risen from the dead, that “All power is given unto me “in heaven and in earth?” Now, since all power in heaven and in earth, was given unto Christ, Is it possible of words being more express of Christ being God, than what is express in said passage?

UNIT. In reply to your remark, of all power being given, and there communicated to Christ, Is it possible of words being more express of Christ not being God? No, not possible: for the power here express was not an innate, but communicated power; therefore, if not innate but received, is not God: for if Christ was God, no power could possibly be

communicated to him—No. For instance, Is it ever once exprest either by Christ, or any other, as of power being either given or communicated to God, or to the Father? No: the expression would be absurd; because God is infinite power; therefore, no addition can be made thereto, or power communicated to him—No: for the power of God is innate; therefore uncommunicated: but the power of which Christ speaks, he tells us expressly, it was only given or communicated to him; therefore, if not innate, but communicated, is not God.

Hence, God can communicate to another, but nothing can possibly be communicated or added to God—No, not possible.

From hence, it is, therefore, now impossible, that a more strong proof, or incontestable evidence, can be produced of Christ not being God: for if Christ was God, no power, according to our observation, could possibly be communicated to him.

But further, in speaking with respect to the power of God, there is certainly nothing to which God has given a being, but what he hath it in his power to annihilate. But with regard to infinite power, if it were possible for God to make a being in every degree as perfect as himself, would it be in God's power to annihilate it? No, not possible: for an equal degree of power being capable to resist, can never possibly be overcome.

From hence, we may, therefore, very justly conclude, that no independent being can possibly exist but God; and if no infinite, no

equal, no self-existent being but he, who is absolute, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, and self-existent God.

TRIN. There remains one text more, which, I apprehend, you will find not without foundation, of Christ being God, and is as follows. John x. 30. "I and the Father are one."

UNIT. One, In what respect?

TRIN. One uncreated, independent, self-existent being.

UNIT. That can never be; for it is simply impossible either for two to be one at the same instant, or of one being two.

TRIN. If impossible, why then is it exprest so in the text by Christ himself?

UNIT. The text was never literally meant by Christ of his being either God, or equal to God, nor is it understood so by any person of judgment (not sold under priestcraft), and who retains the freedom and free exercise thereof; but, as follows, are one in testimony or agreement, to which God bare witness, in giving him power to work miracles, in proof of his being sent by God, to declare his will for the good and salvation of men; and of Christ bearing testimony in his complying with whatever was the will of God, not only in his life, but also in his death: for to believe that Christ, when he saith, "I and the Father are one," meant literally of his being either God or equal with God, we may just, in every respect, as well believe that which is exprest by Christ, Chap. xv. 1. "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman," that he him-

self was actually then a vine-tree, and that he, *viz.* God, whom he calls his Father, was literally at that instant, a husbandman, or farmer in the land of Judea.

Hence, the one belief is just, in every respect, equal with, and as absurd as the other: for that Christ, when he saith, "I and the Father are one," never meant of his being either God, or equal to God, see the context, or verse 29. "My Father which gave them me is greater than all." Now, if the Father was greater than all, he was certainly greater than the Son. See also, Chap. xiv. 28. "If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I." Here Christ tells us expressly, that the Father was greater and superior to the Son, and that the Son was inferior to the Father.

TRIN. Inferior as man, but not as God.

UNIT. No: it is said, "I go unto the Father." Now, the word "I" means expressly the Son, or what you call God; and not what you understand of him as man.

Hence, some, in order to prove the possibility of three being one, and of one being three, have made the following remark. In the body of the sun, there is the substance of the sun, the beams, the heat; and these three, though different, are not divided; therefore all three make but one sun. But to shew the impropriety of the above, both light and heat are dependent qualities. For instance, though both light and heat were annihilated, the sub-

stance of the sun could, no doubt, subsist independent of either light or heat; but neither the light nor heat thereof could possibly exist independent of the substance of that planet or luminary, on which they depend for their existence—No.

From hence, if either the Son or Spirit were God, they could never, therefore, according to said figure, be independent as they alledge—No; but subordinate or dependent gods.

Further, of Jesus Christ and the Father not being one in essence, according to you Trinitarians, Christ himself tells the Jews in express words, saying, that “The Father is greater than all,” and also, “He is greater than he.” Now, if the Father is greater than the Son, he can never possibly be equal to God—No: for to say that a greater and a lesser are equal, is a downright contradiction of terms.

TRIN. When exprest that the Father is greater than he, or than I, it implies only of his being greater than Christ as man, but equal as God.

UNIT. You, like every other sophistical juggler, play with words in such a manner as only to serve yourself, independent of truth: for when exprest, “I and the Father are one,” you here exalt the word “I” equal to God; but when exprest, “The Father is greater than I,” you reduce the word “I,” to that of a mere man: for if the ‘I,’ when exprest that “The Father is greater than he,” implies only Christ as man; the word ‘I,’ in the former, where exprest that “I and the Father are one,” implies no more:

for it is not in the power of language (if it be not to deceive the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking croud) to divide or separate the express meaning of the one "I" from the other; neither can any of the human race, without exposing his own ignorance, make the smallest distinction betwixt the meaning of the latter "I" and the former—No. And to this we may add, Christ likewise saith, "I can of mine own self do nothing." Now, the word "I," when expressed by Jesus, always implies Christ the Sent of God, and is never once expressed by him under a two-fold or double meaning, such as what you, Trinitarians, would sophistically alledge.

But further, as to the Father being greater than the Son, as expressed in the above text, "The Father is greater than I," Is it not astonishing in what manner the word "I" has been sophistically palliated with by you Trinitarians? In the first place, you always ascribe the sense of the word "I," as expressing the divinity of the Son. And in the second place, though ever so expressive of Christ's mission, if against what you sophistically intend, you still palliate and change the sense, as merely implying his human nature.

Hence, Is it possible that when expressed by Christ, "The Father is greater than I," that any thing can be more expressive of his meaning expressly what you call his divine nature? No, not possible. But you Trinitarians quibble, and sophistically play with words, and change the sense thereof to whatever suits your in-

clination, though diametrically opposite to the meaning of Christ. But with respect to the above, of Christ and the Father being one; he that acts under the command, in subordination, and at the desire of another, is one, in whatever the commission is of which he is invested with: for he that acts under the command, or in subordination, as in the above, the actions in which he is employed, though performed by him, are not his alone, because done at the desire and will of another, they being entirely agreed in the performance, of which they are one therein: for he that employs an artificer to build a house, they being perfectly agreed on the plan and expence thereof, the architect, acting conformable to the agreement, is one in building of said house.

Now, that this text, as exprest by Christ, "I and the Father are one," means only one in sentiment, testimony, or agreement, see the following text, Chap. xvii. in Christ's prayer to God for his disciples, verse 11. "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." Verses 21, 22. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one." What is here exprest in this 22d verse, by the

words "glory which thou gavest unto me," tells us expressly, that the glory which Christ enjoyed from God, was not an innate, but communicated glory. I have given or communicated to them, *viz.* the apostles, the same as thou gavest it to me, that they may be one in agreement and testimony, even as we are one. Acts iv. 32. "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart, and of one soul." Now, Is it possible that every heart and soul in the multitude of them that believed, were become literally one individual heart and soul, according to you Trinitarians? If so, they were but one christian; and if but one, they behoved not to die one by one, but all at once.

Now, if the word "one" is not to be understood of testimony or agreement, but in a literal sense, according to you Trinitarians, the word "multitude" being plural, will inevitably make a plurality of gods; as well as of christians. See also, Rom. xii. 5. "We, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Chap. xv. 6. "That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. xiii. 14. "Be of one mind."

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from the above texts, that by including the plural under the singular, implies nothing more than has been already observed in the foregoing, *viz.* of their being one in consent, testimony, and agreement.

Further, to these I shall likewise add what is there exprest in the first epistle of John, Chap. v. 7. "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost," or rather Holy Spirit: "and these three are one." The explanation and meaning of which, appear as follows. The three that bear record are, the Father, the Word (or rather wisdom communicated to him of God, by which he was enabled to work miracles in confirmation of his being the Sent of God, to declare his will for the good of men), and the Holy Spirit (testifying or bearing witness thereto, as in the above), and these three are one. But, to this I shall add what has been exprest thereon, by different learned, great, and celebrated authors, and is as follows.

"And these three are one;" that is, one in consent of testimony; or they all agree in bearing the same testimony: for it is a record or testimony that St. John is here speaking of. And to be one, John xvii. 21. evidently signifies to be one in consent or agreement, and not an unity of nature. It is the same here as if it had been said, "The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, bear testimony of Christ," as if they were but one witness, so perfectly do they agree and harmonize in bearing witness to him. This seems confirmed beyond doubt, by its appearing evident, that those texts of scripture, where two or more persons are said to be one, are evidently to be interpreted of their being one in consent or har-

mony. [See Gen. xi. 6. John xvii. 21, 22, 23. 1 Cor. iii. 8. Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16. With which, compare Gal. iii. 28. Acts iv. 32.] Thus Beza interprets it, "These three are one in consent." And Calvin says, in that, "These three are one," he refers not to their essence, but rather to their consent; as if he should say, "The Father, his eternal Word, and the Spirit," with one consenting voice, do equally bear witness of Christ; and there is no doubt, but that the Father, Word, and Spirit, are said to be one, in the same sense in which it is afterwards said that the blood, the water, and the spirit, are one. In the following verse, it is said of the spirit, the water, and the blood, "and these three agree in one:" which, though it is a somewhat different manner of expression, yet it can scarce be doubted, but that the same was intended by that expression, as in this verse. "And these three are one:" and accordingly the Vulgate hath in both places translated, "are one."

Now, as the spirit, the water, and the blood, are certainly not one in essence or nature, but it must be understood as it is expressed, one in consent or agreement; so it is reasonable to understand in the same sense, what is said in this verse of the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit being one: and perhaps the different manner of expression in the 8th verse (if it was not for variety's sake, or by mere accident), might be used with an intent to shew in what manner, what was said in the foregoing verse, of the Father, the Word, and

the Holy Spirit, being one, was to be understood. Agreeable to this, the Complutenſian Greek copy reads the concluſion of the 7th verſe, "And theſe three agree in one." This evidently appears to be the meaning, if we ſuppoſe this verſe, and the beginning of the 8th, genuine; but there are the ſtrongest reaſons to conclude, that theſe words, "In heaven; the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and theſe three are one; and there are three that bear witneſs in earth," were added ſome hundreds of years after St. John's death: for they are not to be found in the text of any Greek manuſcript, before the invention of printing, or before the ſixteenth century; nor in the text of any ancient verſion, except the Latin; and in that, only in ſome manuſcripts; nor cited by any of the ancient chriſtian writers. And there are ſeveral editions of the Greek Teſtament printed which have not this verſe. The firſt edition that had it was that of cardinal Ximenes, publiſhed at Complutum in Spain, in 1521.; and he took it not from any Greek manuſcript, but from the Latin verſion. The next was Eraſmus' third edition of the Greek Teſtament, printed in 1522.; for he had it not in his firſt and ſecond editions. —And the next was that of Robert Stephens, in 1550. And this is the original and authority of the printed editions throughout all the weſt. Even in the firſt Engliſh Bibles after the reformation, in the time of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. it was printed in a different character, to ſignify its being wanting in the

original: which distinction came afterwards to be neglected.

The printed editions of the Greek Testament, as we have already observed, took these words from the Latin version; and in many of them, they are found only in the margin, not in the text; so that it is highly probable, it was first of all written in the margin of some manuscript by way of mystical exposition, and was from thence transferred into the text by ignorant copists. According to all the Greek manuscripts, and ancient versions, the 7th and 8th verses contain no more than the following words, "for there are three that bear record; the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." The sense of the apostle is perfectly complete with this reading, without any thing else: for his discourse stands thus, verses 5, 6, 7. "Who is " he that overcometh the world, but he that " believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This " is he that came by water and blood, even " Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by " water and blood: and it is the Spirit that " beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. " For there are three that bear record, the " Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and " these three agree in one."

Having, therefore, made it now evident, that the words, "I and the Father are one," and also, "and these three," viz. the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, "are one," is no proof of Christ being God, I shall likewise observe, in corroboration therewith, that

which was exprest by Peter to Cornelius, Acts x. in his informing him in the knowledge of the gospel, he says, verse 38. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and
"with power; who went about doing good,
"and healing all that were oppressed of the
"devil: for God was with him." Hence, the apostle by no means says, that Christ was God—No; but that God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with power: for God was with him: not that he was God, but that God was with him. See also what is there exprest by Luke, Chap. ii. 52. "And Jesus
"increased in wisdom and stature, and in
"favour with God and man."

Now, if Christ was either God, or equal with God, according to you Trinitarians, he certainly behoved to be infinite; and if infinite, could never possibly increase: for that which is infinite, is without either increase or diminution; because not subject thereto. From hence, if Christ increased in wisdom, he, therefore, was not infinite; and if not infinite, he could not, therefore, be God—No.

Further, and to proceed, I shall add as follows, the reply made by Christ to James and John, in their requesting him that they should be admitted to sit, the one on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom. Matth. xx. 23. "To sit on my right hand,
"and on my left, is not mine to give; but it
"shall be given to them for whom it is pre-

"pared of my Father." Now, the words here exprest by Christ to James and John, in answer to their request, that what they asked was not his to give, tells us expressly, that he was neither God, nor equal to God, but acted with submission, and in subordination to the will of God.

But further, with respect to that which is exprest by James and John, in what they required of Christ, that the one might be permitted to sit on his right hand, and the other on his left in his kingdom, and the return made thereto by Christ, of its not being his to give, tells us expressly of their being just as fallible as other men: for of James and John being ignorant of Christ's inability to fulfil what they, in their ambition, asked of him to do for them, is an incontestable evidence, not only of Christ not being in the power they supposed, but also that they were even as fallible in what they either thought, spoke, or wrote, as other men: or if not fallible, they had known expressly, of its not being in Christ's power to fulfil what they required of him. And though the Holy Spirit was promised and sent to teach or instruct them in all things necessary concerning the nature and knowledge of the gospel, and to bring into their remembrance things which were exprest by Christ, it is never once notified that they should be endued with infallibility, as being proof against mistakes in all they either thought, spoke, or wrote, as not to err in what they exprest—No, it never is.

And in many things, such as were disputed, and in which they came to disagree and oppose each other, tells us expressly that they never were infallible: for if infallible, they could never possibly have varied in their sentiments, about things in which they were concerned—No, they never possibly could. And not only this, but infallibility is what never one of the apostles laid claim to—No, they never did; and if never required by them, it would be absurd in us to apply infallibility to them.

TRIN. But the inspiration of the apostles is not supposed to have taken place, till after Christ's death: for the enduement thereof, depended entirely upon their receiving the Holy Spirit; nor are they supposed to have been perfectly infallible, till after that period.

UNIT. The receiving the Holy Spirit, no doubt, as has been observed in the foregoing, brought truths to their remembrance, and enabled them to work miracles, in confirmation of the gospel; but that they either spoke, or wrote infallibly, we have no such evidence. For instance, if endued with infallibility, Why did they quarrel and accuse Peter for preaching the gospel to Cornelius? or, Why was Peter and the rest, if infallibly inspired, ignorant in keeping back the gospel from the Gentiles for so many years, and not having published the same unto them?

TRIN. With respect to the apostles being ignorant, as in the above, God first offered

the gospel to the Jews, in order that he might thereby leave them without excuse.

UNIT. Were the Jews any nearer related to God than the Gentiles? No; but though such had been the case, if the apostles were inspired with infallibility, they would certainly have known God's will towards the Gentiles; and not have quarrelled with Peter, nor have accused him for preaching the gospel to that people—No, they never possibly would.

From hence, we may infer, if ignorant of God's will towards the Gentiles in sending the gospel to that people, this leaves no room to believe of their being infallible, as ignorantly supposed, but is an incontestable evidence, that they only wrote and spoke the same as other men; or they had never resisted the will of God, in his diffusing the gospel among the nations—No, they never possibly had. And as to infallibility, it is what the apostles never claimed in a higher degree, than what they had heard with their ears, and seen with their eyes; and the most to which they refer, is before they received the Holy Spirit. Now, since the apostles never lay claim to that which is above ocular, How dare men have the presumption to claim it for them?

But further, as to the above concerning infallibility, that when constrained by the determination of the Holy Spirit to abolish Judaism, and to instruct the Gentiles in the knowledge and truth of the gospel independent thereof, is of all others the most remarkable instance, and infallible act of the apostles; who, being

deeply prejudiced in favours of which, *viz.* Judaism, would, no doubt, wish to have shunned, though obliged to comply with his determination. But, to return,

Hence, and as exprest by Luke, chap. xxii. 23. "And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him." Strange! yea, very strange indeed! a finite strengthening an infinite! a creature supporting and strengthening the Creator! if God, according to you Trinitarians. See also, Matth. xxvi. where Christ, in admonishing him who drew his sword in his defence, in time of his being apprehended, and having cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, reproves him, saying, "Put up thy sword into its place." Verse 53. "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" Now, if Christ was God, possessor of infinite power, according to you Trinitarians, Why would he have spoke of applying to the Father, *viz.* God (but to himself), for angels in his defence? Or, if God, whose power is infinite, Why apply to angels for help? And also, Does not Christ, when upon the cross, pray to his heavenly Father, that he might forgive his bloody persecutors? Now, if Christ was the infinite God, according to you Trinitarians, How comes he to pray to God, when upon the cross, to forgive his bloody persecutors? Hence, if equal with God, he could certainly have forgiven them without application to God.

And further, it is exprest that God gave the Spirit, not by measure unto him; which implies, though Christ was endued with an uncommon degree of the Spirit, yet not without being communicated to him; but the Spirit is never said to be given to God—No: for nothing can be added to that which is already perfect. Now, since the Spirit is said to be communicated to Christ, therefore, not infinite; and if not infinite, therefore not God. But, to proceed,

Chap. xxvii. 46. “And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, “My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?” Hence, Is it possible that God can forsake God? that God can forsake himself? No, not possible. One being may, indeed, forsake another; but no kind of being, while in its right wits, can ever possibly forsake itself; and if no being can forsake itself, far less can he, *viz.* God, who gave being thereto, forsake himself.

Now, does not what is here exprest, therefore, teach and make it evident, to every unprejudiced mind, that the powers which Christ possessest from God, were not innate, but communicated, as he himself tells us, saying, “I can of mine own self do nothing?” And also, “That which the Father hath given me to do, that I do?”

Further, to these we may add that which is exprest by the apostle Paul to Timothy, first Epistle, Chap. ii. 5. “For there is one

“ God, and one Mediator between God and
“ men, the man Christ Jesus.” Here the apostle speaking of Christ as Mediator, calls him in express words, though invested with the office of Mediator, nothing more than only a man, *viz.* the man Christ Jesus. And if the apostle had supposed Christ either God equal, or the supreme God, according to you Trinitarians, he had never expressed him under the mere character of a man—No, he certainly never had. But, to proceed,

See also, Acts ii. 22. “ Ye men of Israel,
“ hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man
“ approved of God among you, by miracles,
“ and wonders, and signs, which God did by
“ him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves
“ also know.” Here (you will mark this) Peter, in speaking of him to the Jews, calls him no more than only a man approved of God among them, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God (he, *viz.* Peter says) did by him in the midst of them.

Now, if Christ was God, according to you Trinitarians, Why does the apostle Peter set him forth in the above text, with others expressed in like manner by the apostles, as being only a mere man?

TRIN. To that I can make no reply.

UNIT. If the apostles were to speak of Christ being God, after what Peter has expressed of him in the foregoing, it would actually meet in such a jangle of words, that nothing could possibly be depended thereon for truth.

And further, he is sometimes called a pro-

phet; sometimes a priest; and sometimes an apostle; but the writer to the Hebrews, chap. iii. 3. speaks of him the same as Peter, of his being only a man.

Now, if the apostles after having spoke of Christ, as in the above, should change his character, and speak of him as being God; or if one thereof should speak of him in a different character from another, this would be an incontestable evidence of their not being directed, in what they express therein concerning the nature of Christ, by the unerring determination of infallibility, or Spirit of God—No: or if God, they could never speak of him, but in the term God, and not as in the above. And, to proceed,

Verse 36. "Therefore let the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now, Peter tells them here expressly, saying, "Let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom they have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Now, God is a being not made, but uncreated; but Peter tells us, that Jesus was created or made, both Lord and Christ; therefore, not an uncreated Lord, but a created: and if only made according to the apostle, he could not, therefore, be either God, nor yet equal to God. See also, Chap. v. 30, 31. "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree: Him hath God exalted with his

“right hand to give repentance to Israel, and
“forgiveness of sins.”

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from the above texts, that it was God the Father, and him alone, who both raised up Christ from the dead, and not he himself; and likewise exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins: to declare the will of God to that people, who were shut up in darkness by their priests; who refused that God would pardon sin to any, but through an obedience to the ceremonial law. “To give repentance to Israel;” to certify to that people, that by repenting and turning unto God, their iniquities should be blotted out, independent of the law of ceremonies, whereby they had been so long kept in darkness by their priests.

Hence, that Christ never pretended in being God, or the Son of God in a higher degree than by that communicable attribute of divine wisdom, communicated to him, with which he was invested from on high, to declare the will of God for the good and salvation of men, is evident from that which is expressed by him after his resurrection, John xx. 17. latter clause, “But go to my brethren, and
“say unto them, I ascend unto my Father,
“and your Father; and to my God, and your
“God.” Hence, Christ here frankly acknowledges the Father to be his God, as well as the God of his disciples; but it is never once expressed, that Christ was the Father’s God—No, it never is.

But further, see Chap. x. 38. as observed in the foregoing, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit, and with power; who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him." Hence, there is not the smallest meaning from what is here expressed, of Christ being God—No: for the apostle speaks of him only as follows. "That God anointed him with the Holy Spirit, and with power;" and also, not that he was God, but, that "God was with him." Now, in all these passages, Christ is there represented by the apostle, though invested with an extraordinary commission, no more than a man highly favoured of God, sent to declare his will for the good and salvation of men.

TRIN. Be that as it will, he appears to be set forth under a different light by the apostle Paul, Rom. ix. 5. latter clause, "Who is God over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." And also, Phil. ii. 6. "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God." If these texts be no proof of Christ being God, I am, therefore, at a loss to know what proof you require.

UNIT. As to the first of these texts, where it is expressed "Christ was over all, God blessed for ever," commentators being so much divided in their explanations thereon, by reason of the different readings given thereto by the fathers, *viz.* Cyprian, Hilarius, Chrysostom, and others, that no judgment can properly be formed thereof. Ignatius Tertullian and Origen,

call it rashness to suppose Christ to be the God over all. And Eusebius speaks as of its being the constant known doctrine of the church, that Christ himself is not the God over all: He likewise adds, that Sabellius was excommunicated as a blasphemer for this very assertion; as confounding the characters of the Father and the Son; whose power in government, was communicated to him of God, and acted in all things in subordination to the Father, and with submission to his will. And as to the second, where exprest of Christ being in the form of God, therefore equal with him, I would wish to know what you mean by applying the word "form," to a being who fills wide and immense space; and therefore, can never possibly be represented under either form or shape—No. And besides all this, the form of no one object or being, independent of the substance, can ever possibly be that object or being, which it is said to represent—No: for nothing real, when present, can possibly be seen, or viewed under a figure to supply its absence; because of being the original and substance thereof itself. For to speak of form to represent an object, means always the want or absence of that which it is said to represent: for as the model is not the house, or whatever object it intends to describe, but only a representation thereof; neither is the fashion or figure God, who is a being altogether void of either form or shape.

Hence, what is here exprest by the writer

of said text, "Who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," Christ, by that divine wisdom communicated to him from the inexhaustible fountain of knowledge, thereby representing God, thought it no robbery, through the most ample will and consent of his being equal, by virtue of that communicated wisdom, in bearing testimony thereto; this is all, I apprehend, that is implied, meant, or understood, by the writer of said text, in what he has exprest therein: for Christ himself never pretended to be either God, or equal to God—No, he never did: for the whole thereof is only claimed by men, independent of his authority, the same as those who established all the different gods, worshipped among the nations.

But, having thus far considered the above, I shall, therefore, add the following text. John x. 36. "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?" Now, with respect to the above, if Christ was God, or equal to God, according to you, Trinitarians, it could never be said, that God sanctified him—No: for the word "sanctify" implies addition.

TRIN. Yes; but that which the Father is said to have sanctified, implies only the human nature.

UNIT. The human nature being merely derived from the substance of the parent or parents, can never be supposed to have been sent or come from God, but by ordinary ge-

neration; but Christ saith, "Him hath the Father sanctified, and sent into the world." And the word "sanctify" still implies an increase in that which is sent; therefore not infinite; for if Christ had been God, according to you, Trinitarians, the human nature would certainly have been sanctified, in its being united with the divine, independent of the Father.

Further, that Christ is neither God, nor equal with God, as alledged from the above texts, see Mark xiii. 32. "But of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." What is here exprest, of Christ being ignorant of that day, is, therefore, such an incontestable evidence of his not being equal with God, as asserted and relied on by you Trinitarians, that the solution thereof is put beyond all manner of dispute.

TRIN. As man, he, no doubt, was ignorant of that day, and of that hour; but as God, he knew entirely of both.

UNIT. Yes: I know it is asserted from this text by you Trinitarians, that though Christ, as man, was ignorant of that day and of that hour; yet as God, he knew both of the day and of the hour. But to shew the vanity of that assertion, he, *viz.* Christ, saith, "Of that day, and of that hour, knoweth no man;" here Christ, as man, classeth himself with the rest of the human race, "No, not the angels which are in heaven," and are of a higher

rank than man: for it is exprest elsewhere, that "Thou madest him a little lower than they," *viz.* the angels; "Neither the Son," through that communicated wisdom that was with God before time, knoweth any thing of that day or of that hour, "but the Father." Here he, *viz.* Christ, classeth the superior qualities of which he was possest, namely, that communicated wisdom, with which he was endued from God as Son, additional to that of man, betwixt the angelic powers (beings superior to us), and God.

Hence, and of these very qualities with which Christ was endued from on high, namely, that communicated wisdom, which you Trinitarians call God, Christ positively refuseth to have known either the day or the hour thereof, as in the above. And that the ancient christians understood this text in the same light, is evident, from what may be concluded from Irenius, who says that the knowledge of that day, the Son was not ashamed to declare himself ignorant of, and refer to the Father: which proves of his not being omniscient; and if not omniscient, therefore not infinite; and if not infinite, neither God nor equal to God.

TRIN. But does not Christ, in multiplying the loaves and fishes, prove his being God?

UNIT. Was the prophet Elijah, in multiplying the widow's barrel of meal and cruse of oil, a proof of his being God?

TRIN. No.

UNIT. Neither was Christ, in multiplying

the loaves and fishes, a proof of his being God.

TRIN. But there are still greater qualities attributed to Christ, than to the prophet; such as being omnipresent: for he tells his disciples, saying, "Where two or three are gathered together, in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And also, as has been observed, "Lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

UNIT. That, I verily believe; that wherever two or three are gathered together, in observing of Christ's gospel, that wisdom which was communicated to Christ, will, in like manner, certainly (though not in working miracles) be with them. And also, that he, namely that divine wisdom communicated to Christ, would be with his disciples, who are gone to meet with him in heaven, not only to the end of the world, but for ever: and also, with all such (as live conformable to that gospel taught by them) till time shall be no more.

TRIN. But Christ tells his disciples, John xv. 26. "He would send the comforter unto them, which would testify of him."

UNIT. Yes; but he tells them in the former chapter, saying, "The Comforter, whom the Father will send in my name," viz. Christ's, "would teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance;" which implies expressly of his being sent of God, and not personally by Christ: for Christ never pretends in doing any thing exceeding the com-

mon course of nature, but merely by virtue of that divine wisdom, communicated to him of God—No, he never does.

TRIN. But Christ says, that God was his Father; therefore, he may with just propriety be called the Son of God.

UNIT. Yes; God is the Father of all men; but more especially of that divine wisdom with which Christ was endued; and may, therefore, very justly, as proceeding from God, be called his Son.

Further, and to proceed, see Eph. i. 17. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation." Chap. iv. 6. "One God, and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

In the first place, the Father is here called the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the same as he is called the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and also, of every one, without exception, who lives conformable to the will of God. And,

In the second place, we are told "There is but one God, and one Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all;" and who alone communicateth wisdom and gifts to whomsoever he will, for the good of men. See also, Col. i. 15. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." Now, the image is not the being—No; but only a representation of the being. For instance, let a person behold him-

self in a glass, the image he beholds is without all manner of action, but only that which is communicated thereto by the person, or substance it represents. Hence, and as Christ is said to be the image of the invisible God; even so is that which was with God before time, according to what is there exprest by Christ himself in many different texts, as being communicated to him, for the good and salvation of men. For wisdom is what may very justly be stiled the exprest image of the invisible God; because all things were created by his wisdom; or he, by virtue thereof, gave being to all things that are made: for wisdom, by reason of its action, may therefore, in every respect, with as just propriety, be called, as in the above, the first born of every creature; and as exprest elsewhere, saying, "In wisdom hast thou made them all." But sometimes the word "first-born" is exprest of him, in allusion to his resurrection from the dead; and not as being the first of the creation or creatures of God.

Hence, of Christ being exprest under the image of God, and the first-born of every creature, alludes to Eccl. i. 4. where, it is exprest of wisdom being created before all things; therefore, not without beginning, since depending upon the fountain from whence it proceeds.

TRIN. There remains yet another text, that, as I apprehend, appears to favour my opinion, and is as follows. 1 Tim. iii. 16. "And,

“ without controversy, great is the mystery
 “ of godliness; God was manifested in the
 “ flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels,
 “ preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in
 “ the world, received up into glory.”

UNIT. “ Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness:” for it was counted a great mystery, not only with the Jews, but even also with the apostles, that the gospel should be preached unto the Gentiles, and they brought into favour with God. “ God was manifested in the flesh;” namely, that divine wisdom that was with God before time, ere ever he gave being to matter, was, in the fulness thereof, communicated to Jesus Christ, for the good of the human race, or salvation of men. “ Justified in the Spirit,” attested by miracles, which God gave him power to perform, in proof of his mission being from him.

TRIN. I hereby acknowledge, that what you have exprest upon these texts, bears not only some, but even the utmost degree of reason; yet, there are two texts more, as they appear to favour my opinion, I shall refer the meaning to your perusal, and is as follows. Heb. i. 3. “ Who, being the brightness of his
 “ Father’s glory, and the express image of his
 “ person, and upholding all things by the
 “ word of his power.” The other is in Titus, Chap. ii. 13. “ Looking for that blessed hope,
 “ and the glorious appearing of the great God
 “ and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” These cer-

tainly appear of some weight, as in the above.

UNIT. As to the meaning of what is here exprest in these texts, "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person," Christ having that wisdom that was with God before time communicated to him; which wisdom was the express image of his (*viz.* the Father's) person, or rather essence: for the image, as has been observed in the above, is never once to be understood of being the person or substance from which it derives its appearance—No, but only an express representation thereof, appears evident from what follows; therefore, not to be taken, as literally exprest in the text, but as understood in the above. For which see wisdom, Chap. vii. 22. "For wisdom, which is the
" worker of all things, taught me: for in her
" is an understanding spirit holy." Verses 24, 25. "For wisdom is more moving than
" any motion: she passeth, and goeth through
" all things by reason of her pureness: for
" she is the breath of the power of God, and
" a pure influence flowing from the glory of
" the Almighty; therefore can no defiled
" thing fall into her;" as exprest in the above text. Verses 26—30. "For she is the bright-
" ness of the everlasting light, the unspotted
" mirror of the power of God, and the image
" of his goodness. And being but one, she
" can do all things; and remaining in herself,
" she maketh all things new: and in all ages,

“ entering into holy souls, she maketh them
“ friends of God, and prophets. For God
“ loveth none but him that dwelleth with
“ wisdom; for she is more beautiful than the
“ sun, and above all the order of the stars;
“ being compared with the light, she is found
“ before it. For after this cometh night; but
“ vice shall not prevail against wisdom.”

And to proceed to what follows. “ And
“ upholdeth all things by the word of his
“ power,” as exprest in the foregoing, is
through that wisdom observed in the above,
which, as being communicated from God,
thereby manifested itself in Christ by the o-
peration of the divine Spirit, in the miracles
he wrought for the good of men. “ Looking
“ for the blessed hope, and the glorious ap-
“ pearing of the great God, and our Saviour
“ Jesus Christ;” that when exprest “ God
our Saviour,” it always implies the supreme
God, Creator, and Governor of the universe;
namely, the great God, from whom alone
Jesus Christ received and held his mission;
which he has thereby manifested, through
the operation of the divine Spirit, for the sal-
vation of men.

From hence, it is now evident, that the
doctrine of Christ being either God, the equal,
or supreme God, according to you Trinita-
rians; and Platonic christians, contrary to
what Christ himself taught, has no founda-
tion from the above: these texts, on which it
is built, were altogether misunderstood by
ignorant, weak, and designing men, acting

contrary to what he himself required to believe concerning him, who told expressly, that he of himself could do nothing, but by virtue of that power communicated to him from God; saying, whatever the Father hath given or empowered me to do, that I do; positively refusing of his doing any thing of an innate, but only by a power communicated to him of God.

Now, if any thing further remains in favours of your opinion, I am heartily willing to attend on whatever weight it may bear therein.

TRIN. There is a subject, *viz.* Baptism, used in the name of Christ, along with the Father and Holy Spirit, which, I apprehend, is of no small weight, in proof of Christ being God.

UNIT. Though baptism is exprest in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, it is no proof of Christ being God—No: for this ceremony, when used by the apostles, was generally in the name of Christ, independent of either the Father, or Holy Spirit; as appears evident from the Acts of the Apostles, and also from Paul's Epistles (See Acts ii. 28. x. 48. and xix. 15. Rom. vi. 3. Gal. iii. 27.); and was continued by the apostles, and from them down to the Nicene Council; by whom it was pronounced to be invalid, if not performed in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, flatly contrary to what appears to have been the practice of the apostles themselves: for baptism was always

used in the name of the person or author of the religion to which they were baptized, as is evident from many different passages of the New Testament; therefore, is no evidence of Christ being God.

TRIN. There is yet one text, if I be not mistaken, which, I apprehend, is of no small weight, in proof of Christ being God, and is as follows. Col. ii. 9. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

UNIT. In him dwelleth that communicated wisdom, and doctrines proceeding therefrom; or rather a transcript of the fulness of God, manifested through Christ in the gospel, for the good and salvation of men. What is here exprest appears to be the meaning of all that can be justly understood or deduced from the above text, of the Godhead dwelling in Christ; or of his being God, or equal to God, as understood by you, Trinitarians.

Hence, and that there is but one God, is fully evident from 1 Cor. viii. 5. "For tho' there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), but to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." "But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him," of whom are all things, or rather the primary cause of all things, "and one Lord, Jesus Christ," or communicated wisdom by (or through) whom are all things made known,

and manifested unto us, the children of men; and we initiated into the knowledge thereof by him. Similar to the above text, is the 112th chapter of the Alcoran, or Mahometan scriptures, entitled the declaration of God's unity, and is delivered in the name of the most merciful God, and is as follows. "Say God is "one God, the eternal God; he begetteth "not, neither is he begotten; and there is "not any one like unto him." This chapter is held in particular veneration by the Mahometans, and declared by a tradition of their prophet, to be equal in value to a third part of the whole Koran. It is said to have been revealed in answer to the Koreish, who asked Mahomed concerning the distinguished attributes of the God he envited them to worship." SALES KORAN.

Hence, I would to God that not only you, Trinitarians, but that all Christendom, had but as just and proper notions of God, as those taught and profest in the above chapter (by those you call infidels); but this is what they have not. And, I much doubt, if the notions and belief which you, Trinitarians, have adopted, of Christ being either God or equal thereto, contrary to what he himself taught, be as acceptable in the sight of God, as those you condemn as infidels, not to speak of Unitarians.

TRIN. We certainly have account of Christ being long predicted of as such, in the Old Testament, or Jewish history; and not only under the above character, but even also of

what treatment he would meet with; when he should appear.

UNIT. Yes: he is oft-times exprest therein, by such who saw the invalidity of that system, as being the Sent of God. And as they, *viz.* their seers, or what we call prophets, being so much maltreated (for mistrusting Judaism, or Mosaic system), as some of which were, it was very easy for them to know or foresee what would be the fate of him who would utterly overturn, and thereby set it aside; but though hated and despised of priests on account thereof, would certainly at last prevail, and become chief or head of the corner.

TRIN. Yes: he is, no doubt, spoke of as early as the Patriarchs: for it is exprest by Jacob, Gen. xlix. (concerning Judah), in blessing his sons, "That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

UNIT. But that period which is said to have been foretold by Jacob concerning Judah, "That the sceptre should not depart from him," *viz.* Judah, "nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh came," does not hold: for they were two hundred years or upward subject to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and also governed by the laws of that country; which is evident from what is reported concerning the first-born, and by the slavery of making brick; and likewise, their being captives in Babylon, during the space of seventy years;

therefore, were, no doubt, subject to the laws of that country in which they were prisoners.

TRIN. But they are said to have been governed by their own laws.

UNIT. They were not only under the kings and laws of the Assyrian, and Babylonish empires, but were also conquered by the Romans, and governed by the laws of that people; which is evident from the New Testament, of Christ himself having been sentenced, and put to death by the Roman law.

TRIN. But Pilate ordered the Jews to take and judge him according to their own law.

UNIT. Yes: the governor was heartily willing to indulge them in that liberty, in order that he himself might get rid thereof, in passing sentence upon Christ; which is evident from the return made by the Jews to Pilate, saying, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death."

TRIN. But they themselves, *viz.* the Jews, told Christ, John viii. 33. "That they were never in bondage to any man."

UNIT. But Jesus himself tells them, in return, Verse 44. "That they were of their father the devil, and the lusts of their father they would do: for he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth; because there is no truth in him." But, for an incontestable proof of the above, that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, and that they

were not governed by their own laws, thieving was a crime which was never punished with death by the Jewish law, nor by any part of that institution:—the two Jewish thieves which were sentenced by the Roman law, and crucified along with Christ, puts the matter beyond all dispute, of the sceptre or government having been departed from Judah before that Shiloh came.

A further proof of the sceptre having been departed from Judah, as in the above, before that Shiloh came, I shall add as follows, namely, that of Paul's being rescued by the chief captain, when just upon the eve or point of being murdered, by the sentence and determination of the Jewish mob, who were sometimes indulged, by the permission of the governor, in using the power of their ecclesiastical government, in points concerning their religion, or superstitious tenets, in putting people to death for acting contrary to their religious ceremonies or superstition, to which they were so much bigoted. But as the prisoner being sent to Felix the governor, his accusers were thereby disappointed of that indulgence, they had so much desired against him.

To this I shall likewise add the crime of adultery, which was also punished with death by the sanction of the Jewish law. Hence, and that they were dispossessed of said power, see the process of the woman taken in adultery, by the Scribes and Pharisees, and brought before Christ, John viii. in order to ensnare

him. The Romans having long before that period, disarmed the Jews of their laws, and of all civil power, they could, therefore, put no person to death. And though adultery was thus punished with death by the Jews, under the Mosaic œconomy or institution, it never was punished with death by the Roman law: and as adultery was not punished with death by those to whom the Jews were subject, and by whose laws they were governed, they could by no means proceed against the woman, though taken as in the above, without making themselves liable to be punished by said law; therefore, as they being desirous to ensnare Christ, they required of him that he should pass sentence against the woman, for the crime laid against her, of which she was accused; so that, if he should have condemned her, according to Moses, the Roman law would, therefore, have condemned him for passing sentence on her, contrary to the law: and if he had ordered her to be set free, this was not only a breach, but an abolishment of Moses' law; by which the populace would, therefore, have been incensed against him; and he, no doubt, would have been put to death by the mob, or tumultuous rabble, who are always ready to put in execution the wicked devices of the priests, namely, those of a superstitious clergy.

Hence, what is here exprest in the foregoing, is, therefore, an undeniable evidence of the sceptre having been departed from Judah,

and the lawgiver from between his feet, before that Shiloh came. As for the predictions exprest in Genesis, Chap. xlix. which is said to have been uttered by Jacob in blessing his sons, it is more than ten to one if ever he spoke one word thereof; at least of whatever form of words he may have used therein: for there is no depending on a saying conveyed by tradition, which, at least, could not be less than seven hundred years standing, if not perhaps the double of that time: for that book, *viz.* Genesis, could not, at soonest, have been wrote in less than seven hundred years after Jacob's death, which is abundantly evident from what follows. The Israelites, or posterity of Jacob, lived in Egypt about two hundred years or upwards, after the death of that Patriarch.

And to proceed, see Acts xiii. 18—21. “And
“ about the time of forty years suffered he
“ their manners in the wilderness. And when
“ he had destroyed seven nations in the land
“ of Canaan, he divided their land to them
“ by lot. And after that, he gave unto them
“ judges, about the space of four hundred and
“ fifty years, until Samuel the prophet. And
“ afterwards” about the thirty-fourth year of
Samuel. “ they desired a king: and God gave
“ unto them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the
“ tribe of Benjamin, by the space of forty
“ years.” Which in all, down to the time
of Saul, is seven hundred and twenty-four
years; and, including Saul's reign, will make,
in all, seven hundred and sixty-four. Now,
that Genesis, in which the prediction is con-

tained, was not wrote at this long period after Jacob's decease; is evident from chap. xxxvi. of said book, and is as follows, verse 31.

“ And these are the kings that reigned in the
“ land of Edom, before there reigned any
“ king over the children of Israel.” What is here exprest in said text, is an undeniable evidence, of kings having reigned over Israel, prior to the writing of said book, *viz.* Genesis; therefore, it was not wrote till after both Saul and David, and perhaps Solomon, with every other king that reigned over that people. But, to proceed,

Now, as the tradition relating to Jacob could not have been committed into writing in less time than the above period (and how much longer we know not), little or no credit can be given thereto—No; when even a truth itself, whatever number of people, one after another, it is retailed by, though but in the space of one day, not to speak of seven hundred and sixty-four years, will even undergo as many different alterations from the original in which it was first exprest.

Hence, we may, therefore, now learn and conclude from the above, that the supposed prediction of Jacob blessing his sons, especially in what is exprest, “ That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh came,” is, therefore, more likely to have been wrote or put on record in time of David, Solomon, or some of the kings of Judah, by some of the priests or consecrated gentlemen, and thereby

flatter them in confirmation of the long reign or continuance of the sceptre in the line of David, which was of Judah, than by Jacob the ancient ancestor of that race. Now, what is there exprest in that supposed prediction concerning Christ, and of his being God, appears, therefore, to be of little or no foundation.

TRIN. Though the above should fail or come short, in proof thereof, he certainly appears in being predicted of in the Psalms; such as in the xvi. and also xxii. with different others to which they refer.

UNIT. As to the the xvi. David appears rather to speak there concerning himself; such as in conferring with his own soul, and with his Maker, about the affairs of this present life; such as what God had already done and would also do for him. And as to the xxii. the Psalmist is there, I apprehend, complaining of his being forsaken of God; and of his being banished from the throne of Israel by his son Absalom, and despised by his enemies; and of those who took part with Absalom in his rebellion against him, and made a prey of his household in time of his exile; though of all others, I acknowledge, of the nearest allusion to the sufferings of Jesus Christ.

TRIN. But to these we may add what is there exprest in the xlv. and also in that of the lxxii. Psalm; both of which are predictive of Christ, and of his kingdom.

UNIT. Yes; but they are only supposed so by such as do not understand them: for they are even void of the smallest relation either to

Christ or to his kingdom, though believed to be propheticall thereof, by such as are of an undiscerning spirit. As to the xlv. it has oft-times, indeed, been supposed to allude to the gospel-church; but the whole thereof, be the penman who he will, is composed in estimation of Solomon, in congratulating him in his more than ordinary prosperity in the greatness of his government; and also, speaking of the greatness of God, who had raised him to the throne and sceptre of Israel, in giving him judgment to sway it with justice and equity, over that people; and also of the duration of his posterity, in the performance of that office. And likewise, that he, *viz.* Solomon, when called to remembrance, should, therefore, be esteemed and praised by the people for ever and ever, as one whose government should never be cut short, or be interrupted, but should endure as the sun for ever and ever.

Further, and as to the lxxii. it is only a prayer being made to God by David, or he who was penman of this Psalm, for the king and for Solomon his son, that he might give judgment to the king, and righteousness to his son; whereby he should be enabled to judge the people with righteousness and equity, and should break in pieces the oppressor; though none more oppressive to the nations around him than himself.

TRIN. But it is exprest and said that "they shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endureth, throughout all generations."

UNIT. Yes: the penman of this Psalm says, in his prayer to God for the king, and for his son, that "they" (and not only they, but even their posterity also) "shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generation." Or throughout all their generations, "he," viz. Solomon (or rather his wisdom communicated to him of God), "shall come down like rain upon the mown grafs; as showers that water the earth." "In his days," by the exactness of his government, "shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

TRIN. But it is exprest in the 8th and 9th verses of this Psalm, that "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river," viz. the Euphrates, "unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow down before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust." Now, it can never be said that the dominion of either David, or Solomon, reached from sea to sea, or yet to the ends of the earth; therefore, if not accomplished in David, nor in Solomon, it must certainly refer to Christ.

UNIT. Neither has what is here exprest concerning dominion been accomplished in Christ: for his dominion, extensive as it is, is only a mere handbreadth, in comparison of either the Chinese or Turkish Empire, And though exprest thus in the 8th verse of this Psalm, and also in a parallel text of the second concerning David, and is as follows, verse 3. "Ask of me,

“ and I will give thee the heathen for thine
“ inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the
“ earth for thy possession.” The whole, *viz.*
both, is only exprest after the usual manner of
that people, in magnifying the greatness of
their kings and government, by extending
their dominions, whether speaking of David,
Solomon, or of their posterity, as appears evi-
dent from what follows. Verse 11. “ Yea, all
“ kings shall fall down before him ; all nations
“ shall serve him.” Now, this, as exprest in
the above, is what never took place with Da-
vid ; if it be not in the extending his domini-
on in making conquests, by subduing some
of the neighbouring nations, in making their
kings fall down before him ; and also in put-
ting the people under saws, and under harrows
of iron, and under axes of iron, and making
them pass through the brick kiln. And tho’
kings were obliged to submit to him, this was
but a limited submission in comparison of all
nations serving him. But what is here exprest
may, with just propriety, be understood to re-
fer to 1 Kings iv. 21, 24. first clause, “ And
“ Solomon reigned over all kingdoms, from the
“ river unto the land of the Philistines, and
“ unto the border of Egypt: they brought
“ presents, and served Solomon all the days
“ of his life. For he had dominion over all
“ the region on this side the river, from Tiph-
“ sah even to Azza, over all the kings on this
“ side the river.”

Hence, neither did the above, of all nations

serving him, take place in Solomon in being heir to the conquests of David, his father; nor has it ever taken place with respect to Jesus Christ—No: for neither the powers of Asia nor Africa, have ever as yet submitted unto him nor acknowledged him—No; but only those in a part of Europe; and the rest thereof never as yet have, nor appear to do.

Hence, and that this lxxii. Psalm does not allude to Christ, is further evident from verse 15. “And he shall live, and to him shall be given of the gold of Sheba: and prayer also shall be made for him; and daily shall he be praised.” Now, it is oft-times exprest by you, Trinitarians, that prayer should be made to Christ, but never once that prayer should be made for Christ; therefore, can never be supposed, or said to allude to him—No: for the Psalmist, in continuing to magnify the kings of Israel, or rather his son Solomon, expresses himself again as follows. Verse 17. “His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed.” “His name,” because of his renowned wisdom, “shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed” in living conformable to his statutes; and “all nations shall call him blessed.”

Hence, more nations, upon hearing the report of Solomon, have spoke more to his praise, though only a mere temporal king, and though not to be compared with Christ, than those who have accepted and exprest them-

selves in praise of him; therefore, has no reference to Christ, as alledged by you, Trinitarians.

But further, in regard to what has been exprest of the Messiah, the prophet Isaiah, Chap. ix. in speaking of Christ in a figurative sense, with respect to that divine wisdom which God would communicate to him, as being essential for propagating of the religion he intended, and would establish among the nations, expresses himself thus, "And of the increase of his government," which the Jews expected to consist merely of a temporal, "there shall be no end." But to the contrary of which, men have, by virtue of making Christ God, independent of his authority, nigh put a final stop to the increase thereof: for instead of being increased, it has actually been diminished, and thereby defaced more and more, for the space of fourteen hundred years past; and will, no doubt, be the case, till once that effectual bar, the cause thereof, be removed and taken away.

Now, with respect to the Messiah, though many things are said to have been predicted of Christ, we are not to suppose of their being altogether foretold with an eye to him—No. But one thing we may justly presuppose, tho' various things have been exprest concerning the state of others, they have been oft-times misapplied, and alluded by the people to him that should come. Thus Christ, in order to convince the people that looked for him under

such a character, strove to comply therewith. For instance, when just upon his entering Jerusalem, he ordered his disciples that they might bring him an ass, in order that he might ride thereon. And also his coat, which they allude to, that what they call vesture in the xxii. Psalm, he, no doubt, had an eye thereto, in his purchasing it without seam, on purpose that it might not be divided at his death.

TRIN. But he is oft-times foretold of by the prophets under different characters.

UNIT. Yes; but the prophets were divided in their opinions about Christ: for some thereof spake of him as of his being a temporal prince; and not only the prophets, but even the apostles themselves, understood him in that light, each thereof expecting to be advanced to a throne; and upon this very belief, Judas proceeded and brought him to trial, expecting he would declare himself, as in the above. Nor was this opinion circumscribed to the prophets and apostles alone—No: for even others that lookt for him, they all understood him, as in the foregoing. And others again who saw the invalidity of Judaism, or Mosaic system, they expected, and always lookt for him as of his being a spiritual king; but is it possible that ever God would inspire men with contradictions? No, certainly not: for God is a God of harmony or agreement, and not of confusion; for contradiction is what can never possibly be admitted to dwell with him.

TRIN. If the different passages, referred to in the foregoing, be not predictive of Christ,

Why referred to by the apostles as alluding to him?

UNIT. The apostles were only speaking in the above style to the Jews (whose confidence was bound up in what was recorded by their ancestors, in order that they might be reconciled to the gospel, and comply therewith); but never was to the Gentiles.

TRIN. But if we mistrust the apostles, there is no other foundation on which we can depend.

UNIT. Though many famous sayings be conveyed to us by the apostles, yet far short of all what they express and transferred to us; being wrote under a spirit of infallibility, as is evident from many different texts: for which, see Rom. vi. 10. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God." Now, there is nothing can possibly die to sin, but that which is guilty of sin; which, I apprehend, Christ never was: and if not guilty thereof, could never possibly die thereto.

TRIN. But he only died to imputed sin, or to the imputation thereof.

UNIT. To die to imputation, is to depart from imputation, or of having sin imputed, that is, of having the sins of mankind imputed to him: for no person whatever can possibly die to sin, but he that lives to, or in the commission of sin, and is guilty thereof. For a man can never possibly die to that to which he did not live—No, nor was in possession of; therefore, to die to sin, is to die to the

practice of vice or evil habits, to which one has been accustomed to.

Further, I shall just barely observe, as expressed in Matthew xxvii. we are there told, that when Christ yielded up the Ghost, "The rocks
" rent, and the graves were opened; and many
" bodies of the saints arose, and came out of
" their graves after his resurrection, and appeared unto many." Now, what is here expressed, appears to be attended with seeming contradictions: for it speaketh thereof, as of its immediately taking place at his death and resurrection, as if there had been no distinction between the two.

Hence, is it possible, that if such an uncommon circumstance took place, that it would have been passed over in silence by the rest of the apostles, without being taken notice of, in a more or less degree? No, I apprehend not; but shall make no farther remark thereon, lest being already taken notice of in some other place, when speaking thereon. But to proceed,

Verse 17. "But God be thanked, that ye
" were the servants of sin." Hence to thank God that people were the servants of sin, this would be to do evil that good may come of it, or thank God for the commission thereof; which is no less than strange, and is, no doubt, a downright contradiction to all that is wrote. And for a person to thank God for his being guilty of his own damnation, or yet of others being guilty thereof, is certainly a downright

mock of all that is sacred, if exprest intentionally.

See also, Col. i. where speaking of the gospel, verse 6. latter clause, "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world." "As it is in all the world." Hence, how could the gospel be then come unto all the world in the apostle's time, when scarce having reached one fourth part thereof at the present day, though nigh one thousand eight hundred years distant from that period? See likewise 1 Pet. iv. 7. "But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." The first clause of which "The end of all things is at hand," is exprest in connexion with verse 5. and is as follows, "Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead." "Is ready to judge the quick and the dead," which words include such as were alive, as well as those who were dead. The apostle speaks in this verse, as if the judge was just ready to take his seat, "The end of all things is at hand." Some would have this to refer to the end of the Jewish state, which, no doubt, was not then far distant; but as the epistle being general, and wrote to such of that people as were scattered abroad, it cannot properly allude thereto. But the latter clause, which is "be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer," gives it a quite different turn, and alludes expressly to an immediate end of the world, and of the last judgment; and not as supposed in the above.

But if what is here exprest in the foregoing had been wrote under the unerring direction of inspiration, it had certainly not have been exprest, that the end of the world would then have taken place near two thousand years ago—No, certainly not. Hence, many are the texts that could be quoted of the end of the world being then at hand.

Further, to these we may add what is there exprest by the apostle, 2 Cor. xii. 2. “ I knew
“ a man in Christ above fourteen years ago
“ (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or
“ whether out of the body, I cannot tell;
“ God knoweth), such a one being caught up
“ to the third heaven.” As to what is here exprest of his revelation, grounded on his rapture into the third heaven, was forged (as we are told by authors of credit) by the Caineans, and approved by the Gnostics. And also, Eph. ii. 2. “ Wherein in time past, ye
“ walked according to the course of this world,
“ according to the prince of the power of the
“ air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” As to the supposition of there being a second or a third heaven, or of Satan being the prince of the power of the air, such as of God having given up the government of that element to the devil, is only a Jewish fiction exprest by the apostle, according to the received opinion of that people. The first heaven they called the starry; but as this lofty subject, which treats of heaven, has been illustrated in our last book, it would be needless to resume it in this place. And

as to the air being of Satan's dominion, is what no person, in his right wits, can possibly admit; for he is there called a prince; and the word "prince" always implies dominion, and dominion power; which, if possessed therewith, would immediately not only cause, but even spread devastation over this world, without mercy, upon the whole of its inhabitants. But the government thereof, is what God hath, no doubt, certainly reserved to himself, and will by no means give the power thereof to another—No: nor is it possible that God would resign the government of the world to the devil—No, not possible.

Hence, that the apostles pretended in what they wrote being infallible, is what they never did—No. And though asserted as such by fallible men (and, in every respect, as fallible heads as those of our own), of all what they wrote being indited by unerring wisdom, each of what has been observed in the above, is an incontestable evidence of their fallibility. And though many famous truths be conveyed to us by the apostles, in declaring the will of God for the salvation of men, much contained therein, from their imperfection, and other prejudices, is infinitely short of infallible truth. One thing certain, the revelation made to Peter in his being sent to Cornelius, and also the result of the great Synod of apostles met at Jerusalem in behalf of the Gentile Converts in abolishing Judaism, and many other cases of like nature, were, I apprehend, effected by

the unerring Spirit of God. But of all wrote by the apostles, or in their name, being of the same quality, never possibly was, and far less (according to many things exprest in said writings) to be expected. And if some of these books were not received by the first christians or ages of christianity as canonical, How, or where, was the person that had authority, or even durst claim infallibility in the belief thereof of people in after ages?

TRIN. What you have here exprest in the above, is no less than an accusing the apostles in being guilty of error and deceit.

UNIT. Not in being guilty of wilful or intended error—No; but only of inadvertent mistakes, in contradicting themselves; which is certainly an undeniable evidence of their being, in some respects, as fallible in what they wrote as other men.

And as to the apostles being infallible, as has been observed in the foregoing, is what they never so much as laid claim to—No; nor was ever claimed for them by any but such who were just, in every respect, as fallible, or at least as liable by nature to fallibility, as any of the human race, though perhaps not guilty of the same degree of vices.

TRIN. You always speak of the apostles as of their being as fallible, in what they spoke and wrote, as other men.

UNIT. If not fallible the same as other men, How came Peter, on whom they lay so much stress, to deny his master, not simply, but with an oath, saying, "I know not the man?"

TRIN. Be that as it may, our weak and depraved reason cannot be admitted to judge therein.

UNIT. And is reason, by which we judge all things possible to be understood, and without which we can understand nothing, to be despised and set at naught, as unfit to judge in things most essential to us.

Hence, " This puts me in mind of the conduct of a debate in Plutarch about the poetic talents of the famed Pythian Oracle. Some friends were accompanying a young stranger they had with them to a sight of Apollo's temple at Delphi; the persons who used to attend upon such occasions in shewing the temple, had, in course of their office, recited a certain oracle of their god, delivered, as was his more ancient way of delivering his oracles, in metre. The stranger hereupon could not help expressing some surprize, that the poetry of Apollo, the great patron of the art itself, should fall so much below that of Homer and Hesiod, in the beauty and elegance of its stile and composition. Upon which Serapion, one of the party, and himself a poet, observed to him, that, as the oracle came from Apollo, the dress of it must needs be unexceptionable, however otherwise it might appear, through the prejudice of a vicious custom of judging in that affair. Divine compositions were not, saith he, to be measured by human standards; and it was much rather to be supposed, that men may have made a false estimate of what was excellent in Poetry, than

that the god of verse himself should not excel in it. So stanch, you see, was Serapion's orthodoxy in the point, that he chose rather to renounce his very senses upon the hypothesis of an inspiration, than, as was the more natural proceeding, to give up the hypothesis of an inspiration to the clear evidence of his senses." The reasoning of you, Trinitarians, appears to me somewhat of a piece with that of Serapion in support of Apollo.

But further, and to return, with respect to the New Testament referring to the Old, in building its authority on the different passages lately considered from that book, with others of like nature, on which they have laid so much stress in proof of christianity, are only referred to by the apostles, according to the Talmud, and explanations of that book, which consists of nothing more than mere allegory; which, at most, is only one thing like or resembling another; but, in real speaking, are no references at all: an evidence of which is as follows. The proofs taken out of the Old and urged in the New Testament, are sometimes either not found in the Old, or applied in a secondary, as typical, a mystical, or allegorical sense. Thus Matthew, after having given an account of the conception of the Virgin Mary, and of the birth of Jesus, says, Chap. i. 22, 23. "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, Behold, a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel." But

the words, as they stand in *Isaiah*, Chap. vii. 14. from whom they are supposed to be taken, and to whom *Matthew* refers, do, in their obvious and literal sense, relate expressly to a young woman in the days of *Ahas* king of *Judah*; as will appear by considering the context, and is as follows. When *Rezin* king of *Assyria*, and *Pekah* king of *Israel*, were confederates in arms together against *Ahas* king of *Judah*, *Isaiah*, to comfort *Ahas* and his nation, and afterwards to assure them by a sign that his enemies should in a little time be confounded, expresses himself, saying, "The Lord will give you a sign, Behold, a Virgin" or young woman, "shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name *Emmanuel*. And before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good, the land shall be forsaken of both her kings." And this sign is accordingly given *Ahas* by the prophet, who took two witnesses, and, in their presence, went into the said virgin, or young woman, called the prophetess, who, in due time, conceived and bare a son, who was named *Emmanuel*; after whose birth, the projects of *Rezin* and *Pekah* were soon confounded, according to the sign given by *Isaiah*. And the prophet himself puts it past dispute by express words, as well as by his whole narration, that his child was the sign mentioned, when he says, "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in *Israel*." This is the plain drift and design of the prophet literally, obviously, and primarily understood;

and even also by one of the most judicious interpreters, the great Grotius. Thus to understand the prophet to have the conception of the virgin Mary, and birth of her son Jesus, literally and primarily in view, is a very great absurdity: for how could a virgin's conception and bringing forth a child, or bearing a son, seven hundred years after that period, be a sign to Ahaz? and how useless was it to Ahaz, as well as absurd in itself, for to say, before the child born seven hundred years hence shall distinguish betwixt good and evil, the land shall be forsaken of both her kings? which would seem a mere banter instead of a sign.

If the reader desires farther satisfaction, that the literal, obvious, and primary sense of the above, relates to Isaiah's own son, and not to Jesus, I refer him to Grotius, to Huetius (who confirms his explication with the authority of Eusebius, Basil, Jerom, Cyril, Theodoret, and Procopius), to Castalio, to Episcopus, to Curcellæus, to Hammond, to Nichols, to Simon, to Le Clerk, and others.

Further, Matthew gives us another prophecy, which he says was fulfilled. He tells us that Jesus was carried into Egypt, from whence he returned after the death of Herod, chap. ii. 15. "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." Which words being word for word in Hosea, chap. xi. 1. and nowhere else to be found in the Old Testament, are supposed to be taken from

thence; where, according to their obvious sense, they are no prophecy, but relate to a past action, namely, the calling of the children of Israel out of Egypt; which appears to be denied by few.

And again we are told by Matthew, "That Jesus came and dwelt at Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, saying, He shall be called a Nazaren." Which citation does not expressly occur in any place of the Old Testament; therefore, cannot be fulfilled therein. These, with others, are only a specimen of the many more too tedious to mention.

In fine, the prophecies cited from the Old Testament by the authors of the New, do so plainly relate, in their obvious and primary sense, to other matters than those which they produce to prove, that it is to give up the cause of Christianity to Jews, and other enemies thereof, who can so easily shew, in so many undoubted instances, the Old Testament to have no manner of connexion in that respect, but to be in an irreconcilable state: nay, this inconsistency is shewn to their hands by the most learned of the church.

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that the apostles arguments from the Old Testament, are not grounded on the literal sense thereof. Grotius shews this of most, if not all, of the prophecies and citations quoted from the Old in the New Testament, as understood in the above. But further, and to proceed,

To build the authority of christianity on

mere allegory, is to expose the christian religion to the laughter of infidels; and hardening of Jews in their infidelity, rather than to convince them of the truth and justness thereof. And that Celsus, who seems the oldest heathen author that has attacked Christianity, whereof we have any remains, did not only, upon just grounds, attack Christians for their allegorical interpretations of the Old Testament, who, he said, by a most astonishing folly, and a stupidity without example, endeavoured to find out relations between things, for which there was not the least foundation. But for their application of the prophecies in the Old Testament to Jesus, which, he said, agreed to a thousand other persons with equal or more probability than to him, and were applied by forced interpretations; several of which prophecies, Origen yields to Celsus to be enigmatical and allegorical, and to be so applied by the christians; and that Celsus, speaking of some of the prophecies cited by the apostles, says, most satirically, that they are altogether unintelligible, enthusiastical, and perfectly obscure sayings, which no wise man can understand a little of; but only occasion fools and jugglers to apply to their purposes for the amusement of such as attend thereon.

That Porphyry, a most acute Pagan philosopher, wrote a voluminous work (now lost) against christianity, to which Eusebius of Cæsarea wrote an answer (now lost); wherein the said Porphyry, thus charged the Christians in general, and Origen in particular, with allego-

rizing the Old Testament. Some being resolved, says he, to find out solutions for the difficulties which occur in the writings of the Jews, rather than reject them, have recourse to inconsistent interpretations, nothing relating to what is written; and are not so much in defence of those strange doctrines, as in confirmation and praise of their own: for vaunting in great words that what Moses spake with all imaginable plainness, are dark riddles, they enthusiastically give them out as so many divine oracles, pregnant with hidden mysteries; and after confounding the judgment with this sublime language, they deliver their own explications. For an example of this folly, let us take Origen, a person with whom I had some acquaintance when I was very young. He was then, and still remains, in great esteem with the teachers of this doctrine, who loudly spread his fame for the volumes he has left behind him. As for his opinions concerning the divinity and other things, he was a disciple of the Greek Philosophers, and endeavoured, by their principles, to support the exotic fables of the Jews. Moreover, the writings of Plato were never out of his hands; nor those of Numenius, Cronius, Apollophanes, Longinus, Moderatus; nor those of Nichomachus, and the most celebrated Pythagoreans. He read likewise the books of Cheremon the Stoic, and Cornutus; of whom having learned the allegorical method of explaining the Grecian mysteries, he did accommodate it to the writings

of the Jews. And also, Julian did attack the weakness of the apostles in misapplying passages of the prophets, in applying them to Jesus, as in the above.

Now, can any thing tend more to the exposing of christianity to the contempt of Jews and unbelievers in rejecting it, than the grounding the authority of the gospel on mere allegory, such as of one thing being like, or nearly resembling another? No, not possible. And it is on this very foundation also, *viz.* allegory, on which the Alcoran depends for its authority; and on which the Mahometans pretend of Mahomet being typified and prophesied of, under both the Old and New Testament. But, to ground the authority of the gospel on the above, is, in express words, to expose it to the ridicule of all its different enemies.

TRIN. To expose allegory is to weaken the authority of the gospel.

UNIT. In answer to such a weak, inconsistent, and childish objection, if the testimony of the gospel depended merely on the Old Testament, *viz.* Judaism, and the like, On whom does the authority of Judaism depend?

TRIN. Upon God.

UNIT. Strange theology, indeed! that can give credit to Moses' system being from God, but will not give credit to the gospel being from God, nor believe the authority of Jesus Christ, independent of Moses; which is just as much as that truth depends on Moses, *viz.* Judaism, and not upon God.

From hence, if I should believe and admit of

Moses' system being from God, independent of a former, on which it rests its authority, and refuse the gospel being from God, independent of Judaism or Old Testament, as if depending thereon for its authority, is just as much as to prefer Moses to Jesus Christ; as if the will of God depended on Moses or Old Testament alone for its authority, and not Moses upon God.

But further, in making the gospel depend on allegory for its authority, it was by this very deceit, *viz.* allegory, in building the gospel on such gross fiction (which was a consequence of the grievous wolves foretold of by St. Paul, in making the gospel harmonize with Judaism, saying, Acts xx. 29. "I know this, that after my departure shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Whereby not only Celsus, but also both Porphyry and Julian, became its enemies; which, if not adulterated, by allegorizing of what they call types and other fictitious shadows blended therewith, from the purity in which it was taught the Gentiles, I put no doubt, but each thereof (instead of being its enemies) would have been its greatest or best friends.

From hence, we may, therefore, justly conclude, that the building the gospel on Judaism, *viz.* upon such weak and fictitious evidences as are drawn therefrom, has sapt its foundations; and, like a worm at the root, has prevented its growth, in causing it to languish and wither. And further,

From hence, we may infer, that all the different divisions that have taken place therein, are an exprefs consequence of the above: for if the foundation is found on which the superstructure is raised, it indeed, if liable to waste, may be reduced to a heap of earth, but can never possibly fall afunder: but, if the superstructure shall rent and fall in pieces (as it actually has), it is an incontestable evidence, that the fault, or cause thereof, is in the foundation alone on which the superstructure is built, and not in the superstructure itself: for an effect can never possibly take place without a cause, and the cause thereof not prior to the effect.

Lastly, in consideration thereof, Wo! wo! wo be unto such who hold the gospel in unrighteousness! In the first place, Wo be unto them who blend the gospel with Judaism, in making it conform with that institution, as if it stood in need thereof! In the second place, Wo be unto such who require a belief, and will not admit of receiving the gospel independent of Judaism! And in the third and last place, Wo be unto them who give credit to Moses' old rotten and beggarly elements, independent of Christ, but will give no credit to Jesus Christ, independent of Moses! But, to return to the subject of Christ being God, we may further observe,

That the doctrine of the Trinity is what derived its first existence from the Platonic philosophers, the successors of Plato; and he from the Pythagoreans; and Pythagoras from

the Persians, or mysteries of that people; and they from Zoroaster the Persian Magi.

Hence, the adulteration thereof was first ingrafted on the gospel by those who came over from the school of Plato, or Platonic philosophy, and is as follows. The Platonic hypothesis consists of soul or wisdom, of goodness, and of power; and of these three distinct attributes or qualities, *viz.* infinite wisdom, infinite goodness, and infinite power, being considered as so many distinct substances: from hence arose as many Trinities in Unity.

Hence, these, as observed in the above, are the three chief principles of the Platonists: and, if we endeavour to trace the belief of a Trinity as high as we can, we are not to imagine that Plato was the inventor of this Trinity of Hypostases, it being much older than his time; though it does not appear that it was ever before wrought into such a philosophical system, as it was by him and his followers. Among the Platonic mysteries was that of the Logos, on which Amionius and Platinus, both heads of the Platonic school, had commented; was taken and applied to the divine Logos explicated by St. John; which gave occasion and foundation to many philosophical disputes and contests in the school and church of Alexandria. Now, if the divisions of the church were derived from the corruptions of that school, as we are told by Morcellius, Justinian, and others, we shall probably understand the nature of them the better, by considering the system of the Platonic Trinity, as we are told

that the christians rather endeavoured to accommodate the scriptures to reform that philosophy, than by the help of the scriptures to reform that philosophy; tampering betimes, rather to bring christianity down to philosophy, than to make philosophy truckle under the truth and simplicity of the gospel. Which philosophy, being only a sophistication of religion, proved an effectual door to let in all the errors and abominations, which have lain in the bosom of the christian church ever since. And what those errors and abominations were, we may easily perceive by understanding the Platonic system, as in the above. Further, nor does this polytheism stop here—No; for some of these Platonic christians, *viz.* Valentine with his followers, who made profession of Plato's philosophy, imagined that the eternal mind, and his thought, produced two gods; the first a male, and the second a female; and these another couple, who sent forth two more; and so on, till they had emitted eleven couples more, one from another, to the number of twenty-eight; which made thirty gods in whole, or what they call *Æons*: the one half male and the other female; who were supposed by these extravagant brains, to copulate and beget, in the same manner that men and women do generate and produce their children. These, with others, are a specimen of the strange and extravagant notions of the Platonic christians, who blended that philosophy with the gospel-system; and thereby began to vie in the multiplicity of their

gods, and became rivals with the Grecians, who are said to have multiplied their gods or deities to the number of thirty thousand.

But, with respect to this subject concerning a plurality of gods, and the origin thereof, from which the Jews and Gentiles derive their belief, the Pagans, from lack of knowledge, were so contracted in what they conceived of God, as not to admit the sublime idea of one infinitely just, infinitely wise, infinitely powerful, all present, and omniscient God—No. In one sensible object they discovered an uncommon display of wisdom; in another of power; in another they perceived a mark of more than human justice; in another more than human goodness: and, not being able to form an abstract idea of wisdom, justice, goodness, and power, divided their weak, obscure, and pitiful ideas of the supreme God, into an inexplicable display of him. Thus, what we express an attribute of God, is by them called a god; so that, according to Hesiod, they were multiplied, as observed in the foregoing, to three myriads, or thirty thousand of these different deities. And thus arose the belief of the procreation of gods, in their supposing each attribute a god, and of their coition one with another.

And also, that extraneous notion of the Jews, divided from the ancient Pagans, of the gods and sons thereof, and likewise the angels, having coition with women, the daughters of men; and that the angels were thus descended

from the gods by coition; therefore, superior to man.

Hence, peoples believing in doctrines contrary to reason, depends more upon their being the established opinion, than upon truth: for truth, when laid in the opposite scale with the received belief in religious opinions however unjust, is lighter than vanity with the populace, especially when of ancient date.

But further, we are told that St. Augustin, in the seventh book of his confessions, protesteth that the books of the philosophers were useful for him, for to facilitate the understanding of some orthodox truths; and that he had found in some of them, almost all the beginning of John's gospel. Justin Martyr, Clemence, Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and many others, have also confessed that Plato had penetrated into the mysteries of the Trinity. *Le Clerk.*

These few, with Alexander (who was opposed by Arius his antagonist on that subject), and different others, are only a specimen, as observed in the above, of the many more who confounded the gospel with the Platonic philosophy, in blending together the one with the other.

The above notions, whether of Jews, Platonists, or christians, of God having either sons or daughters, as in the foregoing, we may very justly allude to have taken place from their ignorance of God.

Hence, the doctrine of Plato, or Platonic philosophy, as observed in the above, is the first origin of a Trinity, or Trinity in Unity;

and also what gave birth thereto: for of three being one, and one three, was never known in Christ's church, till collected from the system of Plato by the Platonic christians, namely, such as had adopted that philosophy.

TRIN. Of three being one, and one three, viz. a Trinity and Unity, is the current and established belief of the church.

UNIT. Yes; the belief required by the priest, and complied with by the laity, of three being one, and one three, is entirely equal; and may be compared to the rocks, hills, and mountains, on the sides of a deep valley, resounding or echoing back one to another, by the report of a piece of ordnance when fired therein; the one is just, in every respect, parallel, and as void of reason as the other: for to say that three distinct persons are one person, or that one person is three distinct persons, is not only a perversion of language, but a downright contradiction of terms: for they may just, in every respect, as well argue, that a being can really exist and yet not exist at the same time, moment, or instant of time, which is impossible for any one being in the universe, as that three distinct persons can be one, or one three, as in the foregoing. And also, they may just as well assert and require a belief that one distinct existence, which cannot possibly be divided, is three distinct existences, and that three distinct existences, which cannot possibly be united, are one distinct existence; or that three express nothings are one distinct substance, and that one distinct substance,

which cannot possibly be divided, is three express nothings, as to require a belief of three distinct persons being one, and of one distinct person being three, distinct from one another.

In short, assertion has no bounds; neither can it possibly be limited. But one thing is certain, there is no article of faith, though ever so absurd, if required by the priest, but what you Trinitarians will assert for an inviolable truth.

Now, since christians in general have thus wofully divided the unity of God into three distinct branches, it is, therefore, visible, from what took place in a few centuries after having divided the divine Unity, that God will still have a people in the world, though ever so mistaken (like the Jews) in the nature of their religion, to hold the Unity of the one true God; though mean time nothing more than Mahometans.

Hence, the above division is what did not only prevent, but has, in some measure, put, as it were, a final stop to both Jews and Gentiles from becoming christians; and ever will, till once the cause thereof be removed and taken out of the way.

TRIN. But we are positively forbid by the church, and priests thereof, to enquire or call in question the above doctrine.

UNIT. Yes; that I perfectly believe: for it is upon an express prohibition in calling in question the doctrines of Mahomet, and also the corruptions ingrafted on the gospel by the Romish church, that a belief in them, and the

continuation of each thereof depend for the annexing penalties in support of falsehood, deceit, and that which is opposite or against reason, which are inseparable companions one from another. But to proceed,

The doctrine of Christ being God was first ingrafted on the gospel, as in the above, and thereby corrupted by a set of priests of a mongrel nature, *viz.* neither Christians, Jews, nor Platonists; and having received the sanction of the civil power, has been continued therein, and ever will, till once purged thereof by a deliverance therefrom, through the divine agency or power of God.

TRIN. But you know, be that as it will, it is what we are not admitted to call in question.

UNIT. A poor, poor argument, indeed! for it was by the self-same prohibition, of men not having the liberty to enquire into what they were required to believe in, by which a belief in all the heathen gods was established; and not only established, but was, by the same law, brought to eternal disgrace: for by the self-same prohibition, the grossest falsehoods that ever were propagated in the universe, may be established, and thereby pass for divine truth: for to deny people the liberty to enquire into that in which they are to believe, or in which they do believe or repose confidence in, is what would bring not only the worst, but even the best religion under heaven, the gospel not excepted, to disgrace. For if the gospel, when first exhibited by the

apostles, had been promulgated under such a prohibition, it had certainly never taken place in the creation of God—No. And for proof thereof, instead, like you, Trinitarians, of forbidding and laying people under a prohibition to search or call in question, the Bereans are, of all nations and people, the most applauded by the apostles, for searching the scriptures, to see whether those things were so or not. But you Antibereans, who refuse the calling in question to see whether those things be so or not, and Antichrist, are the same express undivided beast. For, as observed in the foregoing, if people have no liberty to enquire into that in which they are to believe, all religions, or religious opinions established by the law of whatever country, must, therefore, be divine. For instance, if Diana (though contrary to reason) had not been established at Ephesus by the law of the country, Demetrius the silversmith, at the head of the craftsmen of like occupation, could never possibly have applied thereto for recourse, of his trade being in danger, despised and set at naught. Similar thereto, it is only Demetrius, or such who require a belief in that which is contrary to reason like that of Diana, that need the authority of the civil power to subject men to believe in what they require; for truth needs no law in subjecting men to believe therein; but no person if sensible thereof, except from a lack either of conscience or of judgment, will admit of falsehood for truth, if not obliged to it—No, he never possibly will. But, on the

other hand, if wanting either in conscience or in judgment, I know nothing can possibly be so false or absurd but what they, if required, will actually, either from ignorance, or hypocrisy, believe therein for truth.

From hence, to require a belief in either a religion or doctrine being from God, and of divine authority, and to refuse calling the same in question, or enquiring into the certainty or credit on which it depends under pain of law, like that of the Alcoran, and corruptions ingrafted on the gospel by the Romish church, not only proves a worm at the root, but reduces it to that which is merely political, having nothing but deceit, worldly-interest, and self-ambition for its end.

But further, Mahomet not only forbade calling his religion in question, but even forbade all manner of disputes about it, under pain of death; and nothing possibly could be a wiser course to prevent its follies and absurdities from being detected: for it is only error and falsehood that desires to shelter itself in the dark, and dares not expose itself to an open view and trial. But truth being always certain of its own stability, makes use of no art to support itself, but dares venture itself abroad on its own bottom or foundation only, and boldly offers itself to every man's search; and the more it is sifted and examined into, the more bright and refulgent will it always appear, and shine with the greater lustre.

From hence, we may add, there is not a more infallible test under heaven of a religion

or doctrine being false, than to prohibit its being called in question: nor can there be a more incontestable evidence of a cause being bad, and of the weakness, than forbidding men the liberty to enquire, speak, or write against it: for liberty makes truth to shine, but error is always afraid, and dare not stand the test of a strict or severe examination: for he that wants and desires liberty to profess what he himself thinks right, it shews him to be nothing else than an ignorant, mean, weak, and despicable wretch, that would refuse or deny others the same liberty which he himself wishes to enjoy: for by liberty of enquiry, error is, no doubt, brought to disgrace; but, on the other hand, truth is thereby made to flourish, and appears with all that greater lustre. For without liberty, as in the above, error can never possibly be detected, nor can truth be distinguished therefrom, but must pass imperceptibly, the one for the other; for it was by virtue of said law, in prohibiting the liberty of enquiring into what was required of the people to believe in, that the Roman Emperors (and likewise the heathen gods) were deified by erecting and setting up their statues in the different provinces of the empire, in requiring obeisance to be paid thereto, or men had certainly never complied therewith—No, they never possibly had.

TRIN. Be these things as they will, the above is a subject we are not to enquire into.

UNIT. Yes: that is the received belief; but God forbid that I should confide or rest my

belief in any one thing (especially my eternal interest), that will not stand an examination. For to be afraid of enquiry, would bring a religion to disgrace.

Now, with respect to the above, if we should admit to be imposed on by priests, in obliging us to believe, contrary to reason, above the power of that heaven-appointed guide bestowed on us of God to direct us agreeable to his will, if once induced to part and give up therewith, no further test remains; but we thereby lay ourselves open to all manner of delusions, imposed on us by the artifice of self-interested and designing men; men of corrupt minds, ever waiting to make a prey of us: which, upon the whole, is to admit of our being put on a par with such as are induced to believe in the Pagan deities.

From hence, let no person be afraid to examine impartially the great and chief articles of his faith, on which his religion is built: for a strict and impartial examination thereinto, may, no doubt, wound and destroy error, falsehood, and deceit, but can never possibly be hurtful to truth—No, it never possibly can.

Hence, with regard to this subject, a most venerable and judicious Trinitarian, whose sentiments I highly revere, says, in speaking thereon, “It is the duty of every one who believes it, to enquire into the truth of what they believe: for he who never doubted a religious truth, never believed it. Merit and demerit do not consist in believing or in misbelieving a truth, but in paying or in not

paying that attention to the evidences of it, which its nature and importance require. A fiery passionate dispute about deity, is not a religious controversy: it is a dark diabolical quarrel" about God. And says further, "It would ill become frail, fallible men, it would worse become Protestant dissenters, who every day sacrifice to religious liberty, to assume a dictatorial air in matters of faith." And expresses himself thus. "What I am going to offer to you on the divinity of Jesus Christ, appears to me the truth; but perhaps (says he) I am deceived; for who can understand his errors: and though I at present believe that Jesus Christ is truly and properly God, should I ever discover the deception, I would retract my error." And also, "Before we enquire into the evidences of the doctrine, let us first give up St. Athanasius. We plead (says he) for the divinity of Jesus Christ; and not for that explication of it, which is contained in a creed commonly attributed to him. The damnatory clauses in that creed favour much of the violent spirit of his times, and have generally been thought harsh and uncharitable; therefore, a disgrace to the cause or religion to which it is applied."

From hence, we may, therefore, justly infer, the Athanasian creed, and damnatory clauses annexed thereto, are, no doubt, expressive of the nature and disposition of those by whom it was compiled, and imposed on such as implicitly received it, to the dishonour of christianity.

Lastly, it is no great wonder, though numbers be offended at enquiring into the truth of what they profess, considering the nature of the different doctrines in which they believe and rely on for truth.

TRIN. But though the above, of Christ being God, or equal to God, should be an error, Wherefore do you attempt to contravert a doctrine which has been of so long standing?

UNIT. In answer to yours, Wherefore did our reformers attempt to contravert the corrupt doctrines ingrafted on the gospel of Christ by the church of Rome? If the one was a duty, as I apprehend you do not refuse, and as it certainly was, so is the other: for it is every person's duty to bear witness against error for its expulsion; but if no person do, we, for certain, must all not only live, but even die in error.

But further, it may, therefore, be observed, that it is only by misunderstanding the following texts, Matth. xvi. 18, 19. "And I say
"also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and
"upon this rock I will build my church; and
"the gates of hell shall not prevail against
"it. And I will give unto thee the keys of
"the kingdom of heaven: and whosoever thou
"shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven;
"and whatsoever thou shalt loose on
"earth shall be loosed in heaven." But of this more afterwards. And also, John x. 30. "I
"and the Father are one," with what refers thereunto in making Christ equal with God,

by which Christ's church hath been corrupted unto such a degree as hath thereby caused God, in speaking after the manner of men, to spew it out of his mouth. Hence, nor will christianity ever again prevail in the world, till once unburdened of these corrupt adulterations, ingrafted thereon by priests: and then after, when once discharged of these woful perversions ingrafted thereon by the above gentlemen, who require a belief therein, it will then shine gloriously and with lustre over the whole human world; for it is only by making Christ greater than what he himself either meant or pretended to, with different other corruptions of like nature, that gave rise to Mahometanism, *viz.* the doctrine of the one true God: for without which permission, it could never possibly have taken place: for if God had not favoured that religion, and admitted thereof as an antidote against the adulteration of the gospel, as observed in the above, the Mahometan religion could never possibly have prevailed, as to have spread itself to such an extent, even some different times more than the whole christian world together. And all, even, too, in less than the space of one century.

A farther degree of this adulteration may be seen in the following dialogue.

DIALOGUE II.

O N

Matth. xvi. 15, 16.

*He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art
the Christ, the Son of the living God.*

TRIN. **T**HE above is a subject on which
I shall be exceedingly happy to
have your opinion.

UNIT. Answerable to your request, I am
willing to serve you in considering the text, and
shall, therefore, observe as follows.

Peter from his forwardness of disposition,
and as mouth for himself and the rest of the
disciples, makes the following reply (not mere-
ly from his own belief alone, but of all the a-
postles), "Thou art the Son" or Sent "of the
living God," not in an ordinary manner, but
in a more extraordinary and higher respect than
other men, endued with an unlimited measure
of the divine Spirit, to declare his will for the
salvation of mankind. And also, Verses 17,
18. "Jesus answered and said unto him,
"Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh
"and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,
"but my Father which is in heaven. And
"I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter; and
"upon this rock I will build my church; and

“ the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”

“ I say unto thee that thou art Peter ; and upon this rock” not Peter (which is by interpretation a rock, or Cephas a stone), according to what is understood thereof by Roman Catholics ; nor upon himself, *viz.* Christ (as believed by a great many of the Protestants)—No ; but upon this rock or foundation, *viz.* this testimony, made known to thee and the other apostles by my Father of being the Son (or Sent) of the living and true God, not in an ordinary manner—No ; but in a more extraordinary and higher respect than other men ; endued with an unlimited mission and measure of the divine Spirit to declare his will for the good and salvation of men. “ And upon this rock,” *viz.* testimony, ground, or credit, exprest in the above, “ I will found and there build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against” this testimony, rock, credit, or foundation, on which I build it.

Conformable to this explanation of faith, namely, a fixt and steady belief of Christ being the Sent of God, is that text, Luke xxii. 31, 32. “ Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath “ desired to have you,” *viz.* my disciples, “ that he might sift you as wheat : but I have “ prayed for thee,” John xvii. ; but more particularly for you of whom I much doubt, “ that thy faith fail not.” But, to return,

And “ The gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” By the gates of hell is, therefore, meant death, as appears from the use of the word ‘ hell,’ which, in scripture, signifies the

grave, and death the gate that leads therein-
to; therefore, death signifies the state of the
dead, and hell the grave, or recepticle of the
dead, or deserted substance thereof. The gates
of hell, and what they call the gates of death,
are equivalent terms, and are, therefore, meant
by Christ that the fear of death, or of being
persecuted to death, shall not prevail against
the testimony or belief relied on and born wit-
ness to, nor prevent its taking place.

Hence, that what is here exprest in the a-
bove is the real meaning of the text, "Upon
this rock I will build my church," appears e-
vident from what follows. For which, see
Rev. xxi. 14. "And the wall of the city," or
church militant, "had twelve foundations, and
"in them the names of the twelve apostles
"of the Lamb." The city here mentioned in
the above signifies the church militant; as do
also the whole book of Revelations. The ex-
planation thereof is, that as every building is
supported by, and rests upon its foundation;
similar thereto is the christian church support-
ed upon the evidence, and united testimony
of the twelve apostles, who delivered to the
world, by preaching and writing, whatever
things they received from Christ, and sealed
the truth thereof with their blood. What is
here exprest by the twelve foundations, is a
downright contradiction of the church being
built upon Peter, according as understood by
Roman Catholics. Hence, it does not only
destroy, but even annihilates the very meaning
of such a doctrine.

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from the foregoing, that both those of the Protestants who understand it of Christ, and Roman Catholics of Peter, have altogether misunderstood the meaning of that rock exprest by Christ, on which the church is built; and is evident from what is here exprest in the above, that "the gates of hell," viz. death, "shall not prevail against it," shall never prevail against this testimony, credit, or belief, on which the church is built. But as death prevailed against both Christ and Peter, therefore, could never possibly imply or allude to them; viz. neither of the two to have been that rock, credit, or belief, against which death, or gates of hell, could never possibly prevail—No. Now, since hell or death prevailed against both Christ and Peter, this puts the matter beyond all manner of dispute, that the word 'rock' implies neither Christ nor Peter, according to the received opinion of those Protestants and Roman Catholics, who believe, as in the above.

TRIN. But if the meaning of the pronoun or word (it) refers to the church, and not to the rock on which it is built, it will alter the sense, and be as follows; which is, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, though against the rock on which it is built.

UNIT. If the gates of hell prevail against the rock or foundation on which the church is built, if the rock or foundation thereof be prevailed against and be destroyed, the church, or superstructure built thereon, must inevitably

perish in course: for a house may be destroyed, and the foundation remain unhurt, but the foundation thereof can never possibly be destroyed, and the house not demolished.

From hence, it follows, the testimony or rock on which Christ's church is built, standeth sure; therefore, can never possibly either perish or be destroyed.

Further, I shall here quote another incontestable evidence, in confirmation of this rock not being personal, as believed by different Protestants, and those of Roman Catholics. The apostle Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, Chapter ii. tells them, Verses 19, 20. "Ye are no more
"strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and household of God;
"and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself
"being the chief corner-stone." "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," and are built upon the rock, testimony, credit, or foundation, of the apostles and prophets' belief. The prophets seeing the invalidity of Moses' system, viz. Judaism, were, therefore, assured that God, one day or other, would certainly vindicate himself in reducing that system, for which they had falsely ascribed his authority; and thereby send some extraordinary person, in order to abolish it, and declare his will for the good and salvation of men.

Hence, that the Jews (as has been observed) expected of one to come, is evident from Matth. xi. 2, 3, 4, 5. "Now, when John had

“ heard in the prison the works of Christ, he
“ sent two of his disciples, and said unto
“ him, Art thou he that should come, or do
“ we look for another? Jesus answered and said
“ unto them, Go, and shew John again those
“ things which ye do hear and see: the blind
“ receive their sight, and the lame walk; the
“ lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the
“ dead are raised up, and the poor have
“ the gospel preached unto them.” Peter and
the rest of Jesus’ disciples being eye-witnesses to
the above, and as they all expected of one to
come, were, therefore, constrained to believe,
from these miracles, that this was he: for as
expressed by those that look for him, in oppos-
ing such as spake against him, “ Will Christ,
“ when he cometh, do more or greater mira-
“ cles than these?” And upon the faith of
these miracles which Christ was empowered by
God to perform, in proof of his mission from
on high, was Peter’s answer to Christ found-
ed. And that faith in giving credit to him
through these miracles, of his being the Sent
of God, or that he was to come, is the rock
(in Christ’s reply to Peter) on which Christ’s
church is built, is fully evident from the u-
nited testimony of the whole.

From hence, it is, therefore, by no means
to be supposed, that the prophets, who lived
and died some hundred years before that peri-
od, were built upon the personal foundation
or rock Peter, according to the received be-
lief of Roman Catholics—No, certainly not:
nor, as Jesus Christ being the chief corner

stone in that building, could never possibly, according to those of the Protestants, be the rock or foundation, *viz.* testimony, on which the chief corner-stone, and others of whatever rank built on that foundation, personally rested their belief or credit given thereto—No, not possible. For all the different stones in a building, and even those of the foundation, with not only one, but each of the corners, can be removed, but the rock on which they rest never possibly can; because one stratum thereof always leads to another; therefore can never possibly be overturned.

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that the above testimony of Christ being the Sent of God, was the rock on which all the apostles, or first row of foundation stones in the building, rested, “Christ himself being the chief corner-stone thereof.”

Further, it is likewise evident, from the above, and that even to a demonstration itself, that Peter was by no means the rock or foundation on which the church was built, more than the rest of the apostles, and bore no greater proportion in the building than they; which proves of Popery being nothing more than a mere farce, and without all manner of foundation from the New Testament; therefore not of the smallest authority from God. But I would to God that Popery was circumscribed to Roman Catholics alone; but this is not the case—No: for all different denominations of what they call Christians, are deeply tinged with the same leaven.

TRIN. Does not the following, or 19th verse, which is, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven," prove the rock which is here exprest by Christ to have meant Peter?

UNIT. No, by no means; as is evident from the 18th verse, which is as follows. "I say unto thee, That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." "For I say unto thee, That thou art Peter," which signifies as if he had pointed with his finger to him in a personal manner; and then after, as if he had pointed to Peter's answer, saying, "And upon this rock," thy declaration, or testimony exprest by thee, and for the rest of the apostles, of me being the Sent of God, to declare his will for the good and salvation of men, "I will build my church. And I will give unto thee," not unto thy testimony which thou hast just now borne and declared of me, but unto thee personally, as mouth for the rest, "the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." The meaning of which is as follows. Thou Peter, in thy zeal and publicness of spirit, and the rest of the apostles, shall open the gospel dispensation to mankind, and thereby instruct them concerning it; but thou alone shalt be the first that shall preach to, and admit the gentiles there-

unto: which took place, and was fulfilled in his preaching the gospel to Cornelius. "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." What is here exprest by the word 'heaven' signifies the church; and the phrase of binding and loosing, made use of in this place, is meant of whatever Peter and the rest of the apostles saw lawful to retain; or whatever they saw lawful to loose: all of which was fully accomplished by the great Synod of apostles met at Jerusalem, Acts xv. in their decree of abolishing Judaism to the Gentiles.

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from what has been here ascribed to the above text by Roman Catholics, that no lie or falsehood can possibly be so great, if once infallibility has been attributed thereto by the clergy, and canonized as such by priests, but what will pass and be received as an infallible and sacred truth by the laity. The above is too much the case with you Trinitarians; which certainly includes all Catholics of the first magnitude, in whatever denomination of christians.

Further, it was an established maxim with the Heathen priests, that, in order to keep the laity in darkness, the above gentlemen, when initiated into that office, in being consecrated by the oracle to whatever idol or idols they engaged to serve, were sworn in their initiation to be true and stedfast in the service thereof. And thus were the mysteries of their oracles continued from one generati-

on to another. And as with Heathen priests, so does it fare with christian priests; they are likewise bound, in their initiation to that office, to whatever errors are ingrafted on the church into which they are initiated; and thus continued from one generation to another, as in the above: by which means, both christian and Heathen priests are the same; at least, both thereof do, by the same rule, keep their laity in ignorance or gross darkness. And the authority used by each of these gentlemen, to secure the laity against departing from a belief in what they require, is inevitable damnation, without mercy, to every one that rejects and will not comply, as in the above.

Hence, What an immense difference there is betwixt a person that knows what ought to be understood concerning the will of God to men, and one who is obliged to take his knowledge from the mouth of a superstitious, enthusiastic priest or Mussulman! What an inexpressible advantage has the one above the other! Hence, the difference betwixt high and low, heat and cold, light and darkness, is no greater than the above.

TRIN. Be that as it will, however much you may have on your side in what you advance, I apprehend there is but few that will either admit or take part therewith.

UNIT. That I actually believe: for truth, in all ages, by reason of its singularity, has had but few friends; but error has always had many votaries. Conformable thereto is that which is exprest by Jesus Christ, saying,

Matth. vii. (after his having ordered men to do to others in all things in such a manner as they would have, or wish that others should do to them), "Straight is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it:"—But, on the other hand, wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to error and deceit, and many there be that go in thereat. He adds further, and says, "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps clothing; but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Yea, and are certainly, of all others, the most dangerous in making people believe they obey and serve God, in that wherein they serve him not. But it is "not every one," as observed by Jesus Christ, "that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, that shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he" only "that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Hence, they who promise men heaven upon any other terms, or independent of the above precept exprest by Jesus Christ, are certainly, of all others, the most dangerous, by reason of their smooth and deluding speeches, whereby they deceive the populace, the ignorant, and unthinking crowd; especially the simple, the credulous, and superstitious devotee.

TRIN. Your arguments, I acknowledge, are not wanting in plausibility or foundation—No; yet, after all, however much truth may be found on your side (as exprest in the foregoing), I am apt to believe that this book, though received by some, will, from the impartialness

of its composition, be forbid by the priests (and their constituents) to be read by the laity.

UNIT. In answer to yours, Upon what account do the priests in the church of Rome forbid the laity to read the scriptures?

TRIN. The reason ascribed by the priests of that church, in forbidding the laity against reading the scriptures, is, lest they should misconstrue or take them up in a wrong sense. But whatever colour or pretence they may put thereon, I heartily believe, that the reason why these gentlemen forbid the laity the reading thereof is, lest they should discover the villany and deluding speeches of the priests; whereby the laity are kept in darkness by the influence of the above consecrated gentlemen.

UNIT. Yes; I apprehend you are right; and though Protestant priests should forbid the laity against the reading or perusal of this book, the inhibition thereof, will only proceed from the self-same cause (you ascribe to Roman Catholics), in order that they may thereby subject and keep them in ignorance also:—for truth is never afraid of error, but error even trembles at the most distant hearing of truth:—for though error strives to disguise herself through the mask of putting on an over-heated zeal for truth, she dare never take the field, but with the priests at her head. For instance, Who was it that attacked and oppressed the gospel as damnable heresy, discharging the apostles against teaching in the name of Jesus?

TRIN. It was the high or chief priests, at the head of that consecrated band, with the elders, the Scribes, and Pharisees.

UNIT. Yes: these are the gentlemen; so that, when not in their power any longer to suppress and pervert the gospel, they, till this time, oppose detecting the corruptions ingrafted thereon.

TRIN. Yes: it is from what you observe in the above you may expect opposition.

UNIT. Yes; but I can meet with no more, or greater opposition, than what the gospel, and its authors, *viz.* Jesus Christ and his apostles, met with from the priests of the different oracles of both Jews and Heathen nations seventeen hundred years ago.

Hence, and to conclude this dialogue, what an immense difference there is betwixt he that searcheth in quest of truth, and him that is afraid thereof? The one, like those whom we are told of by Jesus Christ in the gospel, Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 46. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which, when a man hath found, he hideth, and, for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls; who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Similar thereto, he that searcheth for truth, and having found it, rejoices exceedingly upon its discovery, and immediately, like those of the gospel, gives up with all his for-

mer mistakes as unprofitable vanities, in exchange thereof:—but he that is afraid of truth, and is an enemy thereto, gives the alarm, and even trembles at the first hearing, and most distant report thereof.

Hence, no person need be afraid but of a superior force—No. For instance, a garrison, if impregnable, would not be offended, but even laugh, at all the efforts of an enemy; but when weak, cries out, like one in distress when vanquished or overcome, at the first hearing or report of the enemy, though at the greatest distance therefrom. As in the above, so does it fare with truth; she is never afraid of error; but error is even in a panic, and begins to despair, upon the most distant hearing of truth. But the priest, in order to remedy this defect, and all such of like nature, is sure to reprobate as vain every persons judgment but that of his own; therefore, they must of necessity believe, as infallible, whatever he requires, under pain of inevitable damnation, without mercy, for ever. But God be thanked, we have types, and the freedom thereof, to communicate and diffuse knowledge: for if deprived of this mercy, of which God, in his goodness, has been pleased to favour us with, we would soon again, through the influence of priests, return and be subjected to as gross darkness as ever:—for it is nothing less under God but types, and the freedom thereof, that hath delivered us from our former ignorance or ancient darkness, to the light we now at present enjoy.

T H E
G O S P E L R E C O V E R E D
F R O M I T S
C A P T I V E S T A T E.

B O O K IX.

D I A L O G U E I.

Of Penance, or Presbyterian Court of Inquisition.

I N time of concluding our dialogue on Trinity and Unity, and others in that book, Gentile Christian, having attended thereon with no small satisfaction, declared his hearty approbation of the decision of that, and other discourses. Mean time, when all were happy together in such a final determination on that and other subjects, it was told Gentile Christian, that a stranger waited to see him; and having asked who wanted him, was told it was Mr. Jesuit, with whom he had formerly been acquainted; and who had stayed with him ten or twelve months ago, for some different weeks together. Upon which reply, Gen-

tile Christian rose up immediately, and went forth to welcome his approach; and after having saluted him, then asking for his welfare, introduced him to our company:—And after some conversation was past, Gentile Christian asked him, How, and in what manner, he had been entertained since they had last parted, when together? Mr. Jesuit, in reply, told Gentile Christian he had been employed in quelling a rebellion which had brock out some time ago; and with which also, he, *viz.* Gentile Christian himself, had not only taken part, but stood up in its defence in their last conversation, to vindicate the attempt thereof.

GEN. To what circumstance do you allude?

JES. To the reprobation of original sin.

GEN. I actually thought that a belief therein had been utterly abolished.

JES. No: instead of being abolished, it is now more cried up than ever.

GEN. That I verily believe, from what we may understand by the great goddess Diana, whom all the world were said to worship; that when just upon the eve of being utterly despised and set at naught, through the preaching of St. Paul, Demetrius, the silver-smith, at the head of the craftsmen of like occupation, they being in the same predicament with you Jesuits, cried out, as with one voice, for about the space of two full hours together, saying, “Great is Diana of the Ephesians.”

JES. Yes: that, no doubt, is an undeniable fact. But what is worst of all, a second revolt

appears to take place, as a consequence of the first, to the expulsion of priestly dominion.

GEN. Pray, In what respect?

JES. *Viz.* In the ceremony of penance; which, if abolished, our power in government, *viz.* ecclesiastic, is at an end.

GEN. The sooner the better: for till once an abridgment of said power takes place, the gospel will be kept in exile; but, on the abolishment thereof, it will return to its primitive state, and be thereunto as life from the dead.

JES. If penance should be abolished, What would become of church discipline?

GEN. Discipline in education, namely that of instruction for the increase of knowledge, is, no doubt, commendable and right, because profitable unto us: but that which is censorious, used in way of correction in dressing of penance, has no concern with religion; it being an affair of the civil magistrate, used to deter from vice; therefore, it is no less than a disgrace to be so much as evened thereto: for all that belongs to religious discipline is as follows. If any person walks disorderly, as of an immoral conduct or behaviour, he is, therefore, to be cut off from the privileges of the society, till once he make a better account of life by living conformable to the rules thereof: and if what he is accused for be of such a nature as deserves censure, or of being punished, the civil power will inflict punishment thereon, answerable to his demerit, for the good of the whole.

JES. But does not the apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthians concerning the incestuous person, recommend church censure, in his ordering them, 1 Cor. v. 5. "To deliver
" such an one unto Satan for the destruction
" of the flesh, that the Spirit may be saved
" in the day of the Lord Jesus."

GEN. Yes; he orders him to be lopt off from the privileges of that church; and as christianity being ranked as only a mere heresy with both Jew and Gentile at that period, he, therefore, as not having the assistance of law to punish delinquents, was obliged to use the more hard or coercive measures to keep them in awe.

JES. But does not Paul, in his writing to Timothy, Chap. v. recommend discipline or reproof, as being a necessary ingredient in church government? Verse 20. "Them that
" sin rebuke before all, that others may
" fear."

GEN. You cannot possibly discern the true meaning or purport of the above text, but by the context; which is as follows. Verse 19. "Against an elder receive not an accusation,
" but before two or three witnesses." What is here meant by an elder, is one older in the faith, and whose office it is to inspect and look into the conduct or behaviour of others: and as being under an obligation to detect and correct the faults of others, was thereby exposed to the ill-will, resentment, and hatred, of such whose morals had most need of being inspected. And, therefore, the apostle, on

that account, exhorts Timothy not to receive an accusation against an elder, unless supported by two or three witnesses. And upon this he proceeds to the following verse, "Them (thereof) that sin," *viz.* elders, who are detected, as in the above, as being public teachers, "rebuke before all, that others, (namely, such as are taught by them) may fear," lest they, by following their example, should be led into vice. This, I apprehend, is fully evident from verse 22. "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other mens sins: keep thyself pure." "Lay hands suddenly on no man" to appoint him to the office of a teacher, without proper examination into his character and behaviour, whether he be fit for that office or not; "neither be partaker of other mens sins:" for if thou shalt hastily appoint any man to that office, without proper examination, as in the above, thou wilt be blamed for his fault, and become partaker in the guilt of his misbehaviour; therefore, "keep thyself pure" from all such reflections in others, as well as in thine own conduct. Hence, they who publicly teach all, if they (*viz.* those teachers) sin, they are, therefore, to be rebuked before all, that others who teach may fear and be aware thereof.

What is here exprest in the foregoing, is all that is meant of said text; but you Jesuits, who have misunderstood the above passage, in making it a precedent for dreeing penance, and saying that it ought to be extended unto

all indiscriminately, have been of the worst consequence, as will appear from the sequel.

JES. Though the above text has been made the standard of penance in past ages, I am, therefore, now perfectly convinced of the justness of your comment on that subject. For it is on this very passage, "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear," on which the whole of said doctrine is built.

GEN. Yes: for I know a leading Jesuit (for penance) in a Protestant church, who had cunningly crept thereinto, that gloried in domineering over delinquents, namely fornicators; and in a language like himself, commonly told them in his tyrannizing speeches, when before him, They were going reeking down to hell; and he, for certain, laid the whole stress on said text. And when opposed therein by a modern teacher, who, in explaining the passage on which this noted Jesuit had laid so much stress, opened up the mistake to convince him of his error, and told Mr. Jesuit and his constituents, that they were to be solely guided therein by the rules laid down, Matth. xviii. by Jesus Christ. But Mr. Jesuit's constituents (by whom he was elected, and there established the chief inquisitor of that inquisitorial court), in return to what is there express'd by said teacher, told him, That they would stand to none of Jesus Christ's rules on that head. Pretty! pretty gentlemen, indeed! to refuse to be guided by Christ's laws; and yet, after all, have the assurance to call themselves christians; declaring openly that they

will not stand to the rules laid down by him for the government of his house. The above is no fabrication—No; but is marked in the records of said church.

Now, In what light would a king look upon his subjects, who declared openly they would neither stand to what he commanded, nor be governed by his laws? Would he not declare each thereof rebels? Yes, most certainly, and with just propriety, he would. Hence many pretend to follow Christ, and are called by his name, that will by no means be subject to his laws. But though the above text had meant as understood by you Jesuits, Whether was it most safe to obey and comply with the command of the Master, or of Paul who was nothing more than a servant?

JES. The Master, for certain; but they who are tenacious of church censure, act from a strict adherence to Paul's advice to Timothy in the above passage, "He that sinneth rebuke before all, that others may fear."

GEN. It was from the same pretensions of a strict and tenacious adherence to Moses, that both Jesus Christ and his apostles were accused, sentenced, and put to death; and also, it was by a steady and confident reliance thereon, viz. Moses, that the scribes and pharisees detected the adulterous woman which they brought unto Jesus, when in the temple, John viii. desiring of him that he should pass sentence against her; this they did on purpose to ensnare him. Verse vi. latter clause, "But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote

“ on the ground, as though he heard them
“ not.” Verses 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. “ So when
“ they continued asking him, he lift up him-
“ self, and said unto them, He that is with-
“ out sin among you,” he that is not guilty
of the same vice, or one similar thereto, e-
qually great, “ let him cast the first stone
“ at her. And again he stooped down, and
“ wrote on the ground. And they that heard
“ it, being convicted by their own conscience,
“ went out one by one, beginning at the el-
“ dest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left
“ alone, and the woman standing in the midst.
“ When Jesus had lift up himself, and saw
“ none but the woman, he said unto her, Wo-
“ man, Where are those thine accusers? Hath
“ no man condemned thee? She said, No
“ man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Nei-
“ ther do I condemn thee: go, and sin no
“ more.” Now, since Jesus did not condemn
nor upbraid this adulteress for her sin of a-
dultery, but in the mildest manner bids her
go and sin no more, How dare you, Jesuits,
take upon you, without his authority, to up-
braid and affront, before the congregation or
multitude, one of your fellow creatures for a
single crime. *viz.* that of fornication?

Hence, from what is here exprest in the
9th verse, latter clause, “ And Jesus was
“ left alone, and the woman standing in the
“ midst.” And also, in the 10th verse, “ When
“ Jesus lift up himself, and saw none but the
“ woman,” some ignorant teachers have tak-
en occasion from the above, where exprest of

Jesus being left alone, and the woman standing in the midst, that she there stood betwixt the law and the gospel; and as others, betwixt heaven and hell: but the explanation of either is grossly absurd, as is evident from what follows. "And Jesus was left alone," that is, without any of the scribes and pharisees, by whom the adulteress was brought to him. "And the woman standing in the midst" was in the midst of the multitude that was there attending upon Jesus, before the woman was brought to him; and that "when Jesus lift up himself, he saw none but the woman;" that is, none of her accusers, by whom she was brought before him. Mark what follows. The words "they went out one by one" when compared with verse 12. "Then spake Jesus "again unto the multitude, saying," tells us expressly, that her accusers went out from the midst of the multitude that was attending upon Jesus, before they made their approach: for if there had not been a number standing around Jesus, it could never have been said that they went out—No; but only from him, if alone; or from them, *viz.* the woman and his disciples: for if not in the midst of the multitude, but with Jesus alone, it had been exprest thus, they (*viz.* her accusers) went away, or they went off one by one; and not that they went out: for the words, "they went out," imply expressly of Jesus being enclosed in the midst of the multitude and not by himself alone: for the words, "went out," or, "they went out,"

if not enclosed or circumscribed by some one thing or other, if applied thereto, are altogether absurd. Hence, nor is it said that his disciples went out and left him, *viz.* Jesus, and the woman—No, it is never meant that they went out. Now, since the disciples, who were attending on Jesus, went not out, it can never possibly be supposed or yet said that he was left alone—No.

But, to proceed, “And the woman was left standing in the midst,” namely in the midst of the multitude (and disciples), that was there attending upon Jesus. But to return,

Now, since that Christ behaved, as in the above, towards the woman, Take warning, therefore, ye Jesuits, against domineering over your fellow-creatures: for you have no authority from Christ, neither by precept nor example, to upbraid or affront, no, not the meanest servant in his house—No: for Christ, like a tender and loving parent, does by no means upbraid—No; but intreats sinners that they may forsake iniquity, and become the children of their Father which is in heaven. Now, Why will men continue any longer in opposition, and act against, or even contrary to the law of Christ, in lording over them that are entangled, *viz.* such as are overtaken in a fault, in publishing their weakness to the world, contrary to what Christ himself has commanded?

JES. Though some thereof should be convinced of their mistake, they are afraid, from the engagements they come under in their i-

initiation in church government, to give up therewith, *viz.* the literal sense or meaning of said text, on which they rest the authority of their belief.

GEN. From the self-same principles did the Jewish Sanhedrim, who were initiated into Judaism or Mosaic system, proceed against Christ in putting him to death, and also his apostles: for if they believed of the one, *viz.* Judaism, to have come from God, they were under a necessity to perform the other, *viz.* their putting Christ and his disciples to death. But if our first reformers had acted in such a manner, and had been thus afraid to depart from the engagements of their initiation into the Romish church, like these Semi-Catholics, a reformation in the religion profest by that church could never possibly have taken place.

JES. But as they have been so long accustomed to believe in the ceremony of dreeing penance, according as understood, applied, and relied on in the above text, they cannot admit to depart from it.

GEN. That I verily believe; but that the text "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear," on which you rely for dreeing penance, is not to be understood according to the meaning you have prefixed thereto, I shall refer you to the following passage wrote by the same apostle. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to

“teach, patient; in meekness instructing
“those that oppose themselves.” See also,
Gal. vi. 1, 2. “Brethren, if a man be o-
“vertaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual,
“restore such an one in the spirit of meek-
“ness; considering thyself, lest thou also
“be tempted. Bear ye one another’s bur-
“dens, and so fulfil ye the law of Christ.”
The whole of which is contrary to what is
professed and there practised by you Jesuits, the
bastard sons, and breed of the great whore,
the mother of harlots, by whom ye are nou-
rished, on the poisonous milk of her adulter-
ous breasts.

But, with respect to the above texts, I shall
observe as follows,

Hence, in the first of these, the servant of
the Lord is there instructed, “not to strive;
and is to be gentle unto all men, apt to teach,
patient, abounding in meekness; instructing
all such as oppose themselves.” And,

In the second, if a person shall chance to
be overtaken in a fault, instead of affronting
him, according to you Jesuits, “they that are
spiritual,” are required to admonish, and there-
by “restore such an one (like as Christ the a-
dulterous woman) in the spirit of meekness,
lest they also be tempted.” And further, in-
stead of upbraiding and domineering over one
another’s misfortunes, we, on the contrary,
are required to bear one another’s burdens or
misfortunes; and by so doing, we are said to
fulfil the law of Christ.

Hence, but instead of you Jesuits, the adul-

terous brats, and bastard breed of the great whore (and your constituents, or allies of the beast), acting as in the above, you act altogether contrary, or rather in opposition to the spirit of the meek and lowly Jesus: for instead of restoring, in the spirit of meekness, such as are overtaken in a fault, conformable to the apostle's advice, you, like the devil, do thereby rejoice, and even exult over them in their misfortune, in your affronting such thereof contrary to the gospel of Christ; and all this is in reality, because ye are not of God. See also, 1 Thess. v. 14. "Now, we exhort" or rather beseech "you, brethren," to "warn them" "that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men."

Hence, we see from the above, they are to "warn the unruly, comfort the feeble, support the weak;" and, in short, they are ordered to "be patient towards all men" of whatever failing they labour under.

What is here exprest, in the above, may therefore teach you, Jesuits, against lording over such as are overtaken in a fault; and over the weak, the feeble minded, the misfortunes and failings of others: for instead of being furlish thereto, you ought to "be patient towards all men; persuading them, in the spirit of meekness, and in love," against the evils into which they are fallen, subject to, or exposed. And in so doing, you may thereby expect not only to gain your brother, but even

recover such as are insnared through temptation, and the deceitfulness of sin.

It is, therefore, now evident, from what is here exprest in the foregoing, that all such, whether priests or laymen, who thirst after such mortifications, in lording over the misfortunes of others (*viz.* such as are entangled), contrary to the above texts, are by no means christians—No: for by such practices, they not only deny the name, but even forfeit all right and claim thereto. But, to proceed,

One thing I cannot but observe, as penance being, therefore, a popish tenet, such as have never yet relinquished the rites of that church, cannot dispence in giving up therewith.

Now, if people wish to depart therefrom, they ought by no means to retain her ungodly ceremonies—No.

Thus, I have been oft-times surpris'd to hear those of a Protestant church cry out, and declaim against their ancient ancestor, the great whore, or church of Rome; and yet, after all, could not so much as absolve one of their own delinquents from scandal, without carrying them back to the inquisition-court of their harlot-mother for purification, before they could be absolved therefrom, and received into the bosom of said church; or be admitted of as members of their society.

Further, and to proceed, delinquents, by order of this inquisition, are no sooner heard of, than summoned to appear before the inquisitors of that court, and there receive sentence to dree penance, and be insulted before

the congregation, by the chief inquisitor, contrary to the rules laid down by Jesus Christ, to admonish and exhort sinners, in order that they may repent, turn unto God, and live.

Having thus far considered the presbyterian court of inquisition, I shall, therefore, proceed as follows.

There is not one tenet, which I know of, has been of worse consequence than the present on which we are now treating: for not one, two, nor three, have died martyrs and been cut off for this tenet; but even thousands, if not millions, of innocent children, have fallen sacrifices to the blind and misguided zeal of you Jesuits, in confirmation of this rite.

From hence, I shall, therefore, now essay to enter into some of the particulars concerning this tenet; and thereby shew how inconsistent the holding thereof is to Christ's church; and how subversive it is of the peace of society. Behold the poor unfortunate girl now insnarred or led aside! Methinks I just now hear her thus expostulating and reasoning, in the following manner, with herself, saying, What shall become of me? Now, in the midst of all this my present distress, the clergyman, and other members of the inquisition-court, will, no doubt, cite me before that black and merciless tribunal; and, after being tortured therein by his inquisitors, will, by an act past therein, call me up in the church, and there expose me before the multitude, as if the blackest of all criminals, tearing my character to pieces. What shall I, therefore, now do? my

misfortune before was bad ; but now he will make it appear ten thousand times worse than ever ; so that, no person will, therefore, look upon me, but with disdain ; so that I can never possibly expect to get a husband :—for he will even set me in such a light, that all vile persons, on hearing of my misfortune, will then search after and make a prey of me. I am, therefore, now become next to a slave, and thereby ruined for ever ! Now, in the midst of all this horror, anguish, and distress, she falls into despair, and thereby resolves to put an end to herself : or, if she should intend to wait the hour of her delivery, she will murder the child, in order to conceal the shame, and thereby preserve her character. But this is no sooner accomplished, than the tragedy is discovered ; on which she is immediately seized by the authority of the magistrate, carried away by the officers, and thereby thrown into jail ; where she must lie, until liberated, by charging his Majesty's advocate, the common prosecutor, to bring her to trial within the time limited by the statute : and if a trial is brought against her, she runs the risk of suffering an ignominious punishment, or even death itself, according as the evidence on such a trial shall turn out against her. And if condemned by the judge, she is again carried back to jail, where she mournfully awaits the day and hour of her execution. Now, here comes on the most fatal and dismal end of both the infant, *viz.* the innocent babe, and its unfortunate mother ! Hence, How often

has this become the unhappy consequence of both!

But, on the other hand, when the girl has been preserved from running into either of these most dismal extremes, she at last comes to be delivered. Here is then both a mother and a child; but where is the father to provide for them? The father, for fear of the inquisition, and of being called up in the church, and there affronted in dreeing of penance before the multitude, part of whom being his acquaintance, either enlists to be a soldier, or flies his country. The result is, both the mother and the infant are left as a burden on the parish in which they reside. This being an unavoidable circumstance, another, therefore, takes place, which is. She now comes, by an act of inquisition, to be called up in the church by the parson to dree penance before the multitude; where she is exposed to the very utmost degree; which is little less than telling the worthless part of mankind, there present, that such a person is now become a whore, and that all such may resort thereto, and be served at pleasure. In some time after, perhaps some of the very same kind mentioned in the above, who have heard of her being exposed, makes up on purpose with his deluding speeches, as if he intended to give her marriage, and on no other design or pretence than to satisfy his irregular passion; by which means she is again landed into the same snare. This is repeated over and over again;

till at last she gets a family. All this comes to pass, but no provision is made for them; but each thereof (not only the children, but even the mother herself) will, no doubt, be thrown upon the parish in which they now live or reside. As the circumstance now stands, by whom, then, are their necessities to be supported? Is it by the rich? No. Is it by the poor? The poor's funds, for certain, are charged with that burden.

Further, what is next to be done concerning this matter, to remedy the poor, to relieve or disburden them of this oppression? Hence, the remedy is this, let the father of each child be fined (or exacted) in a piece of money, according to his station (or degree), as the nature of his then present circumstances will admit of. But some who are advocates for this tenet, will object against censuring the pocket, and say, that this is feeding the poor with (or upon) the pardon of sin. But, in answer to this objection, there are none will find fault therewith, but such, whether clergy or laymen, as were never yet capable to read or understand the text: for the text on which this tenet is built is this; "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear."

Hence, it is, therefore, evident, from what has been observed in the foregoing, that nothing is there meant in this text concerning the pardon of sin—No: for the sum and substance of the text is only this,—“that others may fear”—and be deterred from the committing of vice. And it is obvious to every un-

prejudiced mind, that the punishing of the pocket. will be of greater effect to such, and chastise them more than the dreeing of penance; for I have heard many of these delinquents assert, that when once they got over the first day of their appearance, they could have given them a month of penance, or even as long as they pleased. And there is scarce one of twenty who are guilty of said vice, but what makes a mock of this external satisfaction; so that, whenever they have performed the stated days of this solemn mockery, they are again restored to be members of the same society.

Further, it is again objected, that many of the clergy, who being long accustomed to require penance, cannot get the better of this superstitious rite or ceremony, kept up and gloried in by you Jesuits; but, in answer to this objection, let such clergymen, who refuse to part with this tenet, relieve the poor of this oppressive burden, which they bring on them through this superstitious ceremony, out of their own stipends (or fallery), and thereby shew they act from principle: for the apostle, in his commission to Timothy, faith, first Epistle, chap. v. 8. "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

Now, it is, therefore, most certain, that the poor of each parish are in a sense a part of the household or family of the parson or clergyman, that presides and takes the oversight over

a parish or people committed to his care; for he is bound to be attentive of their temporal necessities, as well as of their souls. Now, it is said, that "whoever provides not for those of his own house," or family, "he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Hence, I should be very sorry if any of those clergymen, who profess to teach or preach the gospel to others, should deny the faith by his actions, and at last become worse than an infidel. And I am very much afraid, that there are too, too many of these kind of infidels amongst us. And you all very well know what is the reward of them that oppress the poor; and I am sure this is oppressing the poor with a witness, to load their funds with such numbers of natural or bastard children and their mothers, when not sending the proper supplies of life along therewith. For the poor's funds of every parish are as much the poor's property, as any man's personal property is his own; therefore, whoever they be that have the occasion of overloading them unnecessarily, thereby taketh from them, and robbeth the poor of their right. But to remedy which, he, *viz.* the parson, whose business it is to oversee, hath no more to do but report and apply to the civil magistrate for redress, in behalf of that necessitous society.

Further, it has sometimes been the case, that the mother alone, or together with a few of her confederates when after delivered, she, in order to conceal the birth, and for fear of being exposed in dreeing of penance, carries

the child distant from the place of her residence, and there leaves the infant, where it is exposed to danger; and if it escapes and is got alive, it is thereby preserved in safety from the danger to which it was exposed. Now, as the infant being a foundling, it remains as a burden upon the said parish where it was found; which still adds more to the oppression of the poor, in robbing them of their funds, which are their own property and not anothers. An instance of the above is as follows.

Sometime after I had wrote out my thoughts on this subject, while the manuscript was yet lying by me as a mere secret to the world, in confirmation of what I had observed on the above, one night, a little while after it became dark, there was an infant laid down in the stair-case, nigh to the opening of the house (in appearance scarce two weeks old) along with which was a small bundle. But when discovered, no person would take up the child, till lifted by the master of the family, who caused care to be taken thereof, at the expence of the funds of said parish. But, to return,

One thing I can scarce, therefore, pass without remarking, which is, that those priests who are the greatest sticklers or advocates for penance, appear, of all others, to be least liberal in their substance to the poor. This, no doubt, is what numbers of these indigent persons themselves can attest. One advantage, I acknowledge, may indeed accrue therefrom,

which is, their gates are far less pestered or resorted to by such who are acquainted or know thereof in seeking of alms. From which, I, therefore, very much doubt, if fines (instead of dreeing penance) were to center in the pockets of such priests (who pride themselves in lording over such as are overtaken in a fault, in subjecting them to dree penance), they, like the Pope, might perhaps be the first that would comply with punishing the pocket: but as no part thereof redounds to the personal interest of these gentlemen, it is just all that less to be expected.

JES. Penance is not altogether to be ascribed to the priests—No: for different inferior officers, in what you call their inquisition, are sticklers for that rite as well as they.

GEN. Yes; but these inferior officers, who are sticklers for penance, are creatures of the priest; and are much in the same stile towards the poor with himself. And if I be wrong in either, let the evidence thereof prove itself, by their liberality in relief towards the poor.

Hence, one thing further may be observed in respect to the above, that in whatever sense the priest stands affected, whether with or against penance, so are the inferior officers: for if a superstitious or Semi-Catholic priest be set on penance, so will those of an inferior order be set thereon also. But, to proceed,

If the kirk-session, or members of said inquisition-court, shall join therein with the priest, in obliging these delinquents to dree penance,

they, and him together, ought to be subjected by the authority of the civil magistrate, to give security against burdening the poor's funds of said parish, either by the mother or infant: or if the priest or clergyman, with a majority of said court agreeing with him, shall insist on the dreeing of penance, let the minority protest against their procedure, and thereby relieve themselves of the said expence. And, on the other hand, if the session, or majority thereof, shall insist against the priest or clergyman, with the minority joining with him, that the delinquent shall dree penance, let him either, in his own name, or in the name of the minority that joins with him, protest against their procedure; and thereby oblige them to give security, that neither the infant, nor the mother thereof shall become a public burden to society, or the parish wherein they reside. The priest, in so doing, shall not only thereby relieve himself, and they that join with him, but shall also prevent the poor's funds from being devoured or eaten up by such a superstitious and perverse behaviour: for the poor, if robbed of their right as in the above, whether by inferior or superior officers, ought, therefore, to be refunded out of the pockets of such, of whatever sum they have sacrilegiously deprived them of: for till once refunded thereof, such can never possibly, according to my opinion, approach their Maker, in an acceptable manner, as to be received into favour with him—No, they never possibly can.

From hence, I would, therefore, have every person to be aware of this Popish rite. I know,

indeed, it is hard for some to get the better thereof: for the older it grows, it still becomes the more sacred, especially with the weak, the ignorant, the credulous, and superstitious devotee. But let all such who cannot part or give up with this tenet, return back therewith to Rome from whence it came. But before they go hence, I would ask them one query; which is, That if any person should be guilty profanely to swear an oath, he shall be carried before the judge, by whom he is to be fined in one shilling sterling for each oath, and given to the poor; as I never yet heard of so much as one clergyman, or yet layman, that made the least objection, or condemned the act, but highly approved of the judge for putting the same into execution, I would, therefore, be desirous to know what kind of consciences these clergymen have, that can so easily dispense with punishing the breach of the first table of the law, which is against God, in the taking from him (*viz.* the guilty person) but one English shilling for his transgression, and yet cannot so much as dispense with the punishing of one breach of the second table of the law, which is only against man (or ourselves in general), in taking from them two or three pounds sterling or upwards, and giving it to relieve or supply the necessities of the poor, who come to be oppressed by the said transgression or transgressions. For I always thought, that man had a better right to dispense with things committed against himself, than that which was done against another, e-

pecially against God; but it seems the old proverb still remains and holds true, that that which is not a person's own is easily parted with. But, to me it appears entirely descriptive of these gentlemen, who can so easily dispense with the first table of the law, which respects our obedience to God, and yet will by no means dispense with the second table, as in the above, which is against ourselves: for, as exprest by Elihu, "Great men are not always wise; neither do the aged understand judgment. Therefore, I said, Harken to me: I also will shew my opinion concerning this matter." As for this transgression, of which we now speak, it is certainly, no doubt, offensive to God; and that because it breaks the character of one of his rational creatures, and commonly reduces the person (*viz.* the female) to endless slavery and misery in this life: a loss which certainly can never possibly be repaired, or made up by any but the offender himself, which too seldom happens or comes to pass.

Note. Some, in pursuance of this vice, have alledged, they may use a servant-maid or girl of no fortune at pleasure; but this, no doubt, is a piece of great injustice: the reason why; because the girl, who is possessed of no fortune, has nothing but her virtue and behaviour in life to recommend her for life. From hence, he that dispossesses her of her virtue, robs her of her all.

From this it is evident, that the less for-

tune a girl is of, she ought to be just all that more tenderly used and dealt with.

But further, when the aggressor has been sensible of his offence, and to repair the girl of her loss, takes her unto himself, and uses her as he doth his own flesh, this certainly, according to my opinion, is right and acceptable in the sight of God, and ought to be esteemed by all good men, for putting honour upon God's holy law, in making restitution for the offence done against his fellow-creature. But when a man to atone for his offence, to repair the girl of her loss, takes her unto himself; and yet, after all, to be called up and affronted in the church before the congregation, it is even altogether unsufferable, and ought, therefore, not to be so much as heard of among christians; therefore, "Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon."

Hence, the censuring of persons after marriage, either by fine or penance, *viz.* such as have been overtaken in this fault before wedlock, is not only a shame, but is highly culpable in the sight of God, even incomparably more than those they censure: for in place of encouraging such to marry, in order to prevent further vice, and in burdening the poor's funds, the censure either by dreeing of penance, or of pocket, is rather a discouragement against marriage; where, on the other hand, all due and proper means ought to be used for their encouragement, to induce them to marry.

Further, as hath been observed by some of the chief patrons for this tenet, they who are guilty of this vice ought to be reprov'd before all, that others may fear; but, in answer to this objection, the species of this vice is no more singled out as a spectacle of terror to others, than those specified in the black catalogue; and if other vices, such as variance, emulations, wrath, strife, sedition, covetousness, despite, deceit, pride, revelling, drunkenness, swearing, lying, cheating, evil-speaking, back-biting, hatred, malice, envy, revenge, and the like, with different other kinds of wickedness, can be reprov'd without setting up one of either to be made a spectacle or public example in way of punishment that others may fear, Why not fornication among the rest? But though all the different vices, express'd in the above, were made public spectacles of personal reproof that others may fear, no bad consequences could be expected to accrue therefrom—No; but the case is altogether different in the other, of which we now speak: for by making a public and personal example for reproof, that others may fear, has been of the worst of consequences, *viz.* the murdering even millions of infants; which may be said many of whom scarce to have seen light, besides mothers, *viz.* such as have been executed for murdering their own children.

From hence, the patrons for this tenet may, therefore, be supposed, in some respects, guilty of all the innocent blood that has been

shed, as in the above, *viz.* both infants and mothers. A further consequence of which I shall just barely relate.

Sometime after the manuscript was wrote, a most lamentable circumstance took place in the neighbourhood; even different adults fell a sacrifice, and suffered death, by virtue of this rite; which unfortunately came to pass through an intention (though not against them that suffered) to prevent the shame in being affronted by an act of the inquisition, and thereby subjected to three penance. But further,

None of the above catalogue would have become either burdensome or oppressive to the poor, save that of drunkenness; but this vice of which we now speak, hath been the cause by which the poor have been greatly multiplied, borne down, and oppressed, and their funds altogether exhausted and eaten up.

Having, therefore, considered the nature of the offence, and the abuse made thereof by priests, I shall next, therefore, consider the nature of the punishment that is due thereto, and is as follows.

Hence, every male offender being guilty, as in the above, ought, therefore, to be discerned in a certain sum, answerable to his transgression, and the nature of his circumstance will admit of; and that each male should pay for the female which hath been ensnared by him, according as the judges or civil magistrate shall think proper to exact: the reason why, because he is the first aggressor in having

brought her to shame, and perhaps to unavoidable ruin; therefore, it is proper she should be exempted, and the sum stated by the judge exacted of the man according to law; and thereby thrown into the poors funds, for to support the necessity and wants of that society.

Further, that the meanest person found in this transgression should be discerned in one pound sterling or more; and if he refuses to pay, or find security for the sum stated by the judge, he ought, therefore, to be committed to jail for twenty or thirty days in way of punishment, at the discretion or determination of said judge. And yet, though fulfilling the stated days of his confinement, if ever in better circumstances, shall be obliged to make restitution. And those of better circumstances of two pounds or upwards; and when better still in three pounds or more; and so on, according as the nature of their circumstance or abilities will thereby admit. This for the first transgression; the second double the respective sums; and the third transgression triple these sums: and that each of said sums be exacted according to the law the legislature shall think proper to establish for the general good of society; by which the judges, according to the circumstance of each, are thereby to act in putting the same in execution. And as concerning church censure, I would not that they should be excluded from the society—No; but only from the privileges that belong thereto as christians. For the first transgression, I would exclude them for the space of one year;

and for the second transgression for the space of two years; and for the third for the space of three years. But of this, *viz.* in each of these cases, there ought to be a discretionary power left to the ministers and their sessions, to deal with each thereof according to their penitency or obduredness, longer or shorter therein, answerable to their future behaviour, as they see it necessary, to restore them to their former privileges as members of a christian society. And also, that the parents, if able, should bring up these children, and keep the public free of their burden, in every respect, as much as they had been lawfully begotten; and for that effect, that each thereof be bound with sufficient security to the fulfilment of the above premises.

But, lest some should object against what has been observed in the above, as not being sufficient to refute this superstitious rite in dreeing of penance, I shall, therefore, quote a few texts more for the better understanding thereof. I know it has, no doubt, been asserted by you, Jesuits, the chief patrons for this tenet, or rather what may be called the devil's resting-chair imported by you from Rome, that the requiring of these offenders, as in their paying of money to the relieving the necessities of the poor, in place of being called up in the church, and there to be exposed by the parson in dreeing of penance before the congregation, is contrary to the law of Christ; but, in answer to this objection, the assertion is altogether inconsistent with what Christ hath re-

quired in the gospel. In proof of which, see Matth. xviii. 15, 16, 17. “Moreover, if thy
“ brother shall trespass against thee, go and
“ tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone:
“ and, if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained
“ thy brother. But if he will not hear thee,
“ then take with thee one or two more, that
“ in the mouth of two or three witnesses every
“ word may be established. And if he shall
“ neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church:
“ but if he neglect to hear the church, let
“ him be unto thee as a Heathen man and a
“ publican.”

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from what is here exprest, that you Jesuits, or semicatholics, who thirst in lording and domineering over such as are overtaken in a fault, of your having no authority from Christ, for requiring of them to dree penance, or for affronting the least member, or meanest servant in his house—No: for he orders that each thereof be reprov'd by themselves alone; and, if not reforming, then before two or three witnesses: and afterwards, if still refusing to be reformed, to inform the church or congregation, of their obstinacy or incorrigibleness. And it is even certain, from the foregoing, that Christ desires to expose none till once they refuse to be instructed, and become proof against admonition. For such exposing is not appointed by Christ in dreeing of penance—No; but only this, if they will not be admonished and become obedient to instruction, they are to be lopt off from being members of his house, till

once they have made a better account of life.

Hence, this, and this alone, is the rule established by Christ for an infallible regulation in his church.

Further, we are likewise told, Luke xix. that when Zaccheus was accused by the Jews as being a publican, or more than an ordinary sinner, he saith unto Jesus, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold. And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to thine house." Hence, we see here, that although the Jews accused this publican as being a grievous sinner, yet, by his doing justice in restoring that which they that were under him had unjustly exacted in overcharging of others, and relieving the straits and necessities of the poor, Jesus tells him, that salvation was come to his house. And also, we know assuredly, that relieving the straits and necessities of the poor was of high esteem in the sight of God; though not with those who delight in requiring of penance: a ceremony which they have no authority for from Jesus Christ. See also, Prov. xvi. 6. it is there expressed that, "By mercy and truth iniquity is purged." Now, mercy certainly appears to be meant there the relieving the straits and necessities of the poor and such as are oppressed; and by this, along with truth, iniquity is said to be purged. And for an incontestable evidence that God requires of sinners to relieve

the straits and necessities of the poor, on purpose that they may gain his favour, and be accepted of him, see Isa. i. 16, 17. "Wash ye; make ye clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well: seek judgment, relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow." Chap. lviii. 5, 6, 7. where he saith, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush?" No. "And to spread sackcloth under him?" No. "Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?" No. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness? Is it not to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" Yes. "Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?" Yes. "When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" And also, Eccl. iii. 30. "Alms maketh an atonement for sins." And likewise, Psal. xli. 1. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble." Matth. v. 7. "Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy."

See also, Dan. iv. where he, in giving his advice to Nebuchadnezzar, saith, verse 27. "Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins

“ by righteousness, and thine iniquities by
“ shewing mercy to the poor: if it may be a
“ lengthening out of thy tranquillity.”

From hence, it is not to be expected that any person or people will be so ignorant, as vainly to imagine, that the paying of money will purchase a pardon, or merit forgiveness, and thereby atone for their transgression—No; but is what is here required, and is requisite to be paid by such offenders, for the use to which it is to be applied. But of this, we here see, and are assured from the above, that shewing mercy to the poor is taken by Isaiah, and also by Daniel, for righteousness; and that the putting on of sackcloth, and the bowing down the head like a bulrush in dreeing of penance, as required by you Jesuits, is nothing more than a mere vain oblation, and an abomination unto God; or, in other words, as an offering made to him of bacon or swine's flesh.

Further, though we can by no means make God our debtor, yet, when these acts which he requireth of us are complied with, ariseth, and are produced from principle, they are thereby sustained more acceptable, and of greater value in the sight of God than penance or vain oblations; and are admitted of by him as a meriting of his favour, though not subjected (because left to the freedom of our will as probationers) to fulfil it as a legal debt.

Hence, it is, therefore, now evident, from what has been exprest in the foregoing, that penance is what God never required, or was yet ever so much as either meant or delivered

to us by Jesus Christ, in his communicating to us the will of God, for the good and salvation of men—No.

From hence, we are by no means to suppose that Christ is such a hard master, as if he should require the setting up as a public spectacle, the meanest servant in his house, on account of his being overtaken in a fault, in order that he should return to his duty—No: he is too good a master for to require any such service as that of a slave, namely, as if he, like a tyrant, needed to affront people, to oblige them to become obedient to him. For we are not to imagine that the service of God ariseth from compulsion—No: it ariseth only from choice, the effect of love; therefore, to make penance or affronts an appointment in Christ's church, would be no less than rubbing an affront upon Christ himself, by representing him in such a light, as if he either needed or required such a piece of dishonourable service to be used in his house. The contrary is evident from the above, where he saith, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone." Now, Is there the least affinity here, in setting up persons as beacons or public spectacles by exposing their faults to others, as if this was sufficient to expiate their guilt? No. Thus they riot upon the sacrificing of such misfortunes, contrary to what Christ hath required; by which, they also pretend to deter others.

It is, therefore, now evident, from what is here exprest, that the suffering or dreeing of penance is not an institution of God—No, but only of ignorant, superstitious, self-interested, and designing men.

Hence, such as pay respect to Christ in what he hath required, will, no doubt, comply with his precepts; and such as do not take Christ's precepts for their rule, are only the votaries of fallible men, whose tenets they revere. Further, and to proceed,

Now, I should be heartily sorry, if, after all that hath been said, any of you Jesuits, or clergy of whatever denomination, should prove so obstinate as to deprive the poor of their own proper right: for though such may suppose of their not being culpable therein; yet, in my view, they entirely are.

Hence, there is nothing, I apprehend, in all that hath been exprest, that need prevent the admonishing (if necessary) each of these delinquents, either privately, or in a session, according as the nature of their offence requires, and as they themselves are affected therewith. One thing further I would most heartily wish, that what is here exprest in the foregoing, may prove an effectual mean, under God, for the banishing of this rite or ceremony (which is an exprest relict of popery, and still remains unremoved from this church) unto Rome, that most enormous beast, the great whore, or mother of harlots, from whence it came.

Hence, one thing necessary I shall further add, which is, that nothing ought to be ad-

mitted in religion, but that which is purely divine; for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.

JES. If you strip religion of ceremony, it will appear as nothing at all.

GEN. The more simple religion is, it is, in every respect, just all that more acceptable in the sight of God.

JES. But if you remove ceremony, What would become of such as lay the whole stress of religion upon ceremony?

GEN. That I verily believe: for if the gross of mankind are stript of superstition and ceremony, I apprehend too many thereof would have no religion at all; therefore, they would have it to seek, and, I suppose, not know where to find it: for millions thereof imagine they are serving God, in that wherewith they serve him not; and thereby satisfy themselves in offering to him the shadow in place of the substance.

From hence it follows, the Court of Justiciary in shewing their disapprobation of this tenet, these gentlemen in perceiving the different complex evils comprehended therein, they, in considering the above, rarely, if ever, pass sentence of death against any of these mothers for child-murder, supposing banishment all upon which they can justly proceed.

Lastly, and to conclude, Is it not, therefore, now evident, to every person of discernment, wherefore the Court of Justiciary is not more strict in executing justice upon those mothers who are guilty of child-murder? Hence,

these judges (whose knowledge is not darkened through superstition) being far superior in judgment to those who are advocates for this superstitious tenet, consider each of these different murders an infallible consequence of this pernicious rite; and they, *viz.* such as are the patrons thereof, more guilty than they who have committed the crime; therefore, upon that account, do not suppose that they, as judges, have a right from justice to condemn or pass sentence of death against them; knowing that these delinquents, for fear of being exposed before the multitude in dreeing of penance, are oft-times driven to this unjustifiable action of murdering the infant, or fruit of their own womb; which, perhaps, was begot by a person who had deluded the mother under a pretence of marriage; who, being left by her lover in this melancholy condition, flies to this extremity, in order that if possible she may thereby save her character, and preserve her reputation, which will be lost for ever if exposed to the public under such a degree of shame.

JES. Answerable to your remark, scarce one mother of those who are guilty, as in the above, is now sentenced to death by that court; but are only banished for life.

GEN. No, nor I apprehend never will be sentenced to death by that court, till once what they call the repenting stool is brought to disgrace, and banished from this realm.

Hence. I have, therefore, now delivered all that appears necessary at present concerning

this subject; and if any person or persons shall find a better method than what is here set forth, I shall certainly be happy therein. And if what I have here delivered should prove a mean under God to prevent the murder or taking away but of one single life, whether of the mother or infant, or bring but one pound sterling to relieve the straits or necessities of the poor, I shall therefore not only rejoice in my labour; but shall also think myself happy in their deliverance.

Lastly, and to conclude this subject of penance and inquisition, I shall, therefore, observe as follows.

The authority by which penance is required, is neither more nor less, than by a delegate court, erected and held in subordination from the grand inquisition-court of judicature, established by the authority of that obnoxious beast the great whore, the adulterous mother (of such as are the inquisitors of said court), viz. that abominable harlot, and three-headed monster the church of Rome, is her from whom, and from whom alone, they receive and hold their deploma for said tenet, in their proudly lording and domineering over the consciences of the misfortunate sons and children of men.

Hence, with respect to the whole of this subject, we may thus infer, that both Presbyterians and Roman Catholics have their purgatories; only, with this difference, the Presbyterians have their purgatory in this world; but the Catholics not till after death, or that

which is to come. In which purgatory, the Catholics are said to be tormented for all manner of vices of which they have been guilty; but the Presbyterians only for the sin of uncleanness, *viz.* that of fornication and the like.

Further, the Roman Catholics are said to be tormented in the state of their refinement, *viz.* purgatory, by the devil and his angels; but in the Presbyterian preparation or purgatory, only by the priest and his constituents. In the Catholics purgatory, they are said to be continued therein till once cleansed of their sins, and then pass into heaven; but, in the Presbyterian purgatory, they are only tormented, and thus bleached by the clergyman, *viz.* the priest (in place of the devil), for the space of three different Sundays; and by the strength of whose bleaching-oils, *viz.* vitriol and the like, the sinner is there perfectly cleansed from all his uncleanness of which he was accused; and, by virtue of said clearance, is immediately received into heaven, *viz.* the church.

Hence, what an immense advantage have those of Presbyterians beyond the Catholics! The Presbyterians are only tormented and thereby punished, in being put through the rubbing-boards by the priest for the space of three different days, *viz.* Sundays, and thus made perfectly fit for heaven, and immediately pass thereinto; but the Roman Catholics are tormented not only three days, but for the space of many years, if not releas-

ed by the priest, before admitted to enter, as in the above. But one thing certainly deserves our particular notice, which is, The Catholics are said to be tormented in their purgatory by devils; but the Presbyterians only by the priest; who himself alone must perform, and thereby undergo the devil's office, and like a slave stand all this drudgery and hard work, of bleaching the fornicator for the space of three Sundays without any assistance.

P O S T S C R I P T.

HAVING therefore considered the subject of penance, I hope the illustration thereof will redound to the conviction of many. But what surprises me most of all is, that there are not far more instances of the above vice, considering with what kind of doctrines such numbers of people are taught, and instructed in by these Antinomian Jesuits, who are commonly the chief patrons for this Antichristian tenet.

Hence, these gentlemen have almost, if not altogether, reduced the gospel of Christ to a system of faith and believing, independent of what they call good works or moral duties, taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles: for they say, in deluding the people, that there is nothing profitable therein for salvation under the gospel but faith alone. By which doctrine, mankind are thereby reduced to a piece of mere dead or

inanimate matter, void of all manner of action. But, if such were not altogether ignorant of the first principles or inherent laws of nature, they would certainly have known of its being an established law by him who at first gave being to matter, that not so much as one particle thereof, but what would infallibly be attracted, and gravitate towards another. For instance, if a great tower, or an impending rock, was to lose its proper contact, and in obedience to the said laws in its gravitating towards the center, was to fall upon a number of persons which had taken shelter under its shade, by which a great many thereof were killed; some of which company having barely escaped with their lives, who, in way of revenge for the misfortune or loss they had there met with, were to fall upon the fallen rock or tower, and there smite or break it to pieces, in order to punish it for the hurt which they, or those with whom they were concerned, had thereby sustained, Would not this be the same as with the dog, who by chance, in being hit by a stone, immediately, in way of revenge, turned thereupon with a snarl? Now, if any person should find fault why these pieces of dead, inanimate matter, as in the above, *viz.* a male and female, should, in their obedience to the principal inherent laws of nature, be attracted together, the one to the other, in way of coition, Would they not be just equal to the person who smote the rock, and with the dog that snarled at the stone, which he imagined was thrown on purpose to

hit him? Hence, according to the above doctrine, that a person is depraved by nature and unable to resist sin, there was nothing in either of these cases that exceeded an obedience to the principal law due to all different species of inanimate matter.

Likewise, or as I once heard a noted Jesuit, who, in teaching or in haranguing his hearers, told them, That a person could do no more towards his own reformation, than a dead corpse when rotting in the grave could do towards its resurrection. Now, if what was thus exprest by this high-flown Jesuit be true, man is therefore no more culpable for his vices, or for his not reforming himself thereof, more than the dead corpse rotting in the grave was for its not raising itself from the dead: for if equal in one respect, they certainly are in the other.

But further, there is another, or second set, which appear somewhat more favourable in their sentiments towards the state of man: for although they suppose him to be a piece of mere inanimate matter, they still admit of matter being capable to be changed in its mode or figure by the skill of the artist, and constructed by the power of the operator into a certain kind of machine capable of action; and of being acted upon, and liable to be put in motion whenever the operator is pleased to apply either weights or springs thereto; or of being drawn or impelled by mere external force, of whatever kind of element is found necessary or answerable for that purpose, to complete

man as a mere fictitious machine, acted upon as in the above.

Now, if man, by virtue of Adam's first sin, be thus depraved, and no power left therein to obey or do the will of God, as not only supposed, but even asserted by the above consecrated gentlemen, he can never possibly according to justice, if dispossessed thereof by Adam, be punished for doing evil; if subjected to the performance thereof as in the above. And, if every vice, according to their assertion, be an unavoidable consequence of Adam's first transgression, not they, but he, and he alone, and none but he who subjected them to the performance thereof, can possibly (according to justice) be punished on account thereof—No: for if every vice be an unavoidable consequence, as in the above, and they not accountable, this sin, of which we now speak, is certainly therefore among the rest.

Hence, and if every vice is, therefore, an unavoidable consequence of the first, the priest who believes therein may, in every respect, just as well accuse and reprove the machine for not moving when no impulse is applied to impel or put it in motion, or admonish the posts on which the roof or galleries of the church or house rests and is supported or borne up, as they: for in so doing, he thereby proves himself, in reproofing such, under as great a delirium or disease of madness, as one of which when raving through the grates of bedlam.

DIALOGUE II.

Of Orthodoxy.

MR. JESUIT, after the discourse on penance being concluded, having frankly acknowledged the justness of the decision given thereto by Gentile Christian, begins with this reflection.

However just and decisive your arguments are, they, for certain, are not the most orthodox, according to our received belief. To this replied Gentile Christian. I plead in behalf of no other orthodoxy, than what is conformable to truth—No.

JES. Are not orthodox principles conformable to truth?

GEN. If agreeable to the nature and moral attributes of God, they certainly are; but if not suitable thereto, they are not. But to illustrate this subject, I shall, therefore, consider it as follows. If the king's stamp should, by authority, be impressed upon nothing more than only a piece of leather, it will pass as valid in that nation (though sustained by none other), for whatever value is put thereon. Thus, in like manner, does it fare in that of party religion; whatever article or doctrine comes to receive the stamp of human or legal orthodoxy, yea, though diametrically opposite to the nature of God, it passeth with the sect

or party from whom it received its sanction, in every respect as valid as from God himself. Hence, but if a piece of gold or silver shall receive the impression of the king's stamp, it will pass as valid, not only in that nation alone, but in every other nation, not on account of the impression, but for the value of which it consists. Similar thereto is real or true religion, or what may be stiled divine orthodoxy: for whatever articles of faith or doctrines are of such a quality as to agree with the moral attributes of God, they have certainly a divine right to bear the image of the true God, and none other, though falsely ascribed thereto by ignorant, self-interested, and designing men: for both gold and silver will pass as valid in whatever nation, not for the impression put thereon—No; but only for the quality of which it consists. In like manner, whatever articles of faith, or doctrines built on the above test, *viz.* the moral attributes of God, will, like the gold or silver, be sustained as valid, and received as divine in every nation, by all such as are men of judgment. And whatever doctrines will not agree with the above test, are not to be received as divine; therefore, cannot possibly be sustained as from God—No.

Hence, and to proceed, for if orthodoxy depends only upon the name, and not on the above test, *viz.* the moral attributes of God, all religions, whether Heathen, Jewish, Mahometanism, Roman Catholic, Protestant, or what not, must therefore be orthodox: for not one thereof but what is sustained as being

purely orthodox, or right in their own opinion. But further, and to proceed,

True or divine orthodoxy, is what depends altogether upon the moral attributes of God, and harmony that is inseparable therefrom: but there is a legal or nominal orthodoxy, whose authority relies altogether upon the civil, and not on that which is divine. But a nominal or legal orthodoxy depends rather on acts of parliament (than upon truth), in order to oblige and subject people to its belief; without which, it could never possibly have taken place: and, without partiality, may, no doubt, be demonstrated with the greatest evidence, that all christian churches have suffered more by their zeal for orthodoxy, and by the violent methods taken to promote it, than from the utmost efforts of their greatest enemies. Hence, the more ignorant that either a person or people are, they are just, in every respect, all that more able to receive the greater degree of nominal orthodoxy. But further,

A legal, or what we may call human orthodoxy, is not limited by the moral attributes of God—No; but that which is divine is always circumscribed by the perfections of the Deity, *viz.* his holiness, his justice, his goodness, and truth. But human orthodoxy is bounded by neither, but only by the unlimited desires of fallible, self-interested, and superstitious men, which consists in nothing but discord; but whatever is orthodox in the sight of heaven, will not make the least jar or disagreement in that divine harmony which

subsists amongst the moral attributes of God—
No; but a nominal or legal orthodoxy, which
is of men, commonly sets them at enmity one
against another.

JES. You appear to speak of more orthodoxies
than one.

GEN. Yes: two different species of ortho-
doxy do actually subsist; one thereof is divine,
but the other nominal; which is merely fic-
titious, even nothing more than only the badge
of a party; therefore, can neither profit nor
recommend us to God. But, to proceed,

The difference betwixt Jesus Christ and our
present orthodox teachers is as follows. Christ,
in order to prove the reality of what he taught,
always referred his hearers to common sense;
but they, on the contrary, do not only refuse
the use thereof to mankind, but utterly reject
reason (or common sense), which is the gift
of heaven, as vain and unprofitable in the
sight of God; and reprobate every one as ob-
noxious in the sight of heaven, that would
make use thereof. To this we may add as
follows.

Weakness and credulity are, therefore, not
only the basis, but even the original parent of
a nominal or legal orthodoxy. But, in proof
of legal or human orthodoxy being only a
mere fiction, and not of divine authority, is
evident from the third and fourth centuries of
the christian æra; during which periods (as
observed by some of the christian fathers) they
had a different creed for almost every new
moon. The cause of which instability arose

from a controversy which took place betwixt Alexander a platonick christian bishop, and one Arius a presbyter, concerning Trinity: each side, after another, were orthodox in their turn; but it depended altogether on the emperors' determination, of whom they were pleased to favour and take part with. And thus they continued, till at last, after various reigns, the emperors being tired through the different broils and tumults which accrued therefrom, it was in or about the fifth century established by law, after Popery had begun to rear its head; under whose sanction it has, therefore, remained as infallible unto this day.

JES. In answer to what you have exprest in the foregoing, orthodoxy has been long understood as being a test of a sound faith; but, as represented in the above, it certainly appears as unprofitable and vain: and if we have no test, how, then, shall we distinguish one doctrine from another?

GEN. A nominal test is nothing more than only the badge of a party: for every sect is orthodox to themselves, but heterodox to one another.

Hence, but for the better understanding this nominal test, what is called the most orthodox doctrines with both Papists and Protestants, have their existence from the christian fathers; especially from those of the third and fourth centuries.

Further, as christianity began to spread, Pa-

ganism became still in less esteem or repute in the world ; but more so when it came to be discountenanced by government, and christianity had received the sanction of civil authority, and large benefices given to the clergy by Constantine ; this gave occasion to many of the Heathen or Platonic philosophers to come over and embrace christianity, perhaps, more out of a prospect of preferment, than for love thereto. Many of which philosophers, with different other ones who had come over before them, being much attached to their great favourite, *viz.* the Platonic system, therefore, set on foot and put them on a scheme, whereby they could make the New Testament, or gospel system, and the Platonic philosophy, harmonize the one with the other. By which industry, they composed, and thereby produced, a set of what they call orthodox principles or doctrines, which have remained in vogue ever since in a great part of the christian world : and by the assistance of these two, *viz.* the christian and Platonic systems, we have our established orthodoxy. But, lest any should object against the truth of what is here expressed, I shall refer the reader to the seventh book of Augustin's confessions ; where he protesteth, that the books of the philosophers were useful (or even of great use) to him, for to facilitate the understanding of some of what he calls orthodox truths ; and that he had also found in some of them almost all the beginning of the gospel of St. John. Justin Martyr, Clemence, Alexandrinus, Eusebius, and

many others, have also confessed that Plato had penetrated into the mysteries of the Trinity. But whoever will make it their business to know or be acquainted with the New Testament, that they may understand it in a proper sense, conformable to the nature and moral attributes of God, will very easily see, that a great many of what they call orthodox or systematical doctrines have a nearer relation to that of the Platonic system and Heathen philosophers, than to the New Testament, or gospel of Christ. And yet, after all, how often have I heard such (as are patrons for these doctrines) who are the greatest debtors to the Pagan or Heathen philosophers for their orthodoxy, both judge and jury, in sentencing and turning them (with the rest of the Heathen world) down to hell without mercy, not only assuming the place of God, in usurping his authority, by taking unto them that office which he hath reserved for himself in judging his creatures, and will by no means give to another. But I shall observe as follows.

Hence, with what disrespect do some who pretend to be christians (not of the least but of the first magnitude, according to Judaism), speak of the ancient Pagans? When, meantime, the ideas which many of the Heathen sages had of God, may justly make such pretenders to blush and be ashamed, from what notions they actually hold and form of him, opposite to that wherein he is represented in the gospel, taught by Jesus Christ: for he is

there set forth as a God of love; a God of mercy; a God of harmony; a God of patience, long-suffering; slow in being offended; abundant in goodness and truth. But the Jews, who were a dark, cloudy, a sour and gloomy people, oft-times represented him in their system, *viz.* Judaism, as being a jealous, a peevish, passionate, implacable, and revengeful God; which Plutarch, though only what they call a mere Heathen, considered and looked on that religion, wherein God was thus represented, as a most impious superstition, and horrid blasphemy, more affronting to the Deity than downright Atheism itself. But, to return,

Having thus far descanted on orthodoxy, if any thing further remains in favour thereof, I am not only willing, but shall be happy to hear it.

JES. Instead of insisting farther on this subject, I am rather inclined, from what has been exprest thereon, to submit.

GEN. I advise no person to believe from hearsay; but, on the contrary, to put as little implicate confidence in me as I have put in others: for if the justness and impartialness of my reasoning do not invite the candid enquirer, to read and give his approbation of this and other subjects on which I have treated, I by no means wish for it. But as reason, or light of nature, being the gift of heaven bestowed on us for our guide, I therefore entreat all, especially the unprejudiced, to make use of that pilot: for this, no doubt, is the surest method

whereby we can possibly attain to a just and proper knowledge of truth; and without which we can never possibly discover or have any just or true ideas thereof: for that of our reason, when properly digested, is what can never possibly deceive us; but if once we are induced to suspend that noble faculty, and adopt the opinions of others, we thereby expose ourselves in giving credit to all manner of deceit. Further, as observed by a celebrated author, if this discerning faculty of framing ideas deceive us, God himself would, therefore, be a deceiver, by representing falsehoods to us under an appearance of truth.

From hence it follows, if this were the case, our reason would, therefore, be no longer of any service to us—No; it would be no less than a pernicious gift, tending rather to lead us astray, than conduct us aright to that which is acceptable in the sight of God. But God cannot deceive us—No: for deceit and injustice are attributes altogether unworthy of an absolutely wise and perfect Being. Hence, let us, therefore, by all means consult our reason before we give credit to the opinions of others; and adopt their authority in that which will not agree with the above test.

Lastly, And to conclude, divine orthodoxy will therefore stand the test, when that which is human must give way, and perish for ever,

THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE.

BOOK X.

DIALOGUE I.

Of Revelation.

JUDAIZER, having for some space given way to the conversation of others, like one in suspense, expresses himself as follows.

I am pretty certain, said he, from our last conversation, that you are no great friend to Judaism or Jewish system.

Gentile Christian, in reply, told Judaizer; If I, said he, was a friend to Judaism, or to the fabulous history transmitted to posterity by that people, I could not possibly, said he, be a friend to truth—No; but a downright enemy thereto.

Mr. Judaizer, in return, asked Gentile

Christian what would become of the world if we had no revelation.

GEN. In answer to yours, What do you mean by revelation?

JUD. The books contained in the Old and New Testament.

GEN. Whatever has been delivered by Jesus Christ for the good and salvation of men, and also by his apostles, and others, whether before or since, conformable thereto, I take to be from God; and whatever will not conform or agree with the above test, I do not believe, but absolutely refuse of its having come from him.

Hence, I know, indeed, some, in order to prove that the whole of what bears the name of revelation is divinely inspired, confidently affirm, that whatever has been either wrote or spoke by persons who have been once inspired is therefore the immediate effect of inspiration: but if this assertion were true, that persons, when once inspired, are under a continued influence and an immediate impulse of the divine Spirit, and that every thing delivered by such for the future was unerringly certified to them by Almighty God; if this was the case, How comes it to pass that the eleven apostles did not know which of the two, *viz.* Joseph or Matthias, were fit for the apostleship, without casting lots to determine the matter? or, that the gentiles were to partake and be heirs of the gospel as well as the Jews? And also, How comes it to pass, when convened together in the great council or synod in Jerusa-

lem, if they were under a continual or immediate inspiration, that they did dispute and wrangle among themselves concerning the gentiles in the matter of circumcision?

Hence, if this was the case, that they were continually inspired by the unerring Spirit of God, How, then, come Paul and Barnabas, from a heat of contention, to separate from one another? And also, How comes Paul to accuse Peter for dissimulation? These, with others of like nature, may suffice to shew the insufficiency of such an assertion as in the above.

But further, in order to shew how far they who believe all that pass under the name of revelation, have the advantage of the Deists, they tell us of what great cruelties, slaughter, and blood-shed, prevail among such where revelation has not come nor discovered itself. But, in answer to this objection made against the Deists, By what authority did the Israelites cut off the seven nations of Canaan? Did they not claim the sanction of revelation for the authority of all the different robberies, cruelties, and slaughters against these nations? Hence, did they not ascribe the authority of revelation for all the different cruelties, slaughter, and blood-shed, not only of the Canaanites, but even also against whatever people or nation they went?

Further, was it not in virtue of what they call revelation, that they opposed all the different nations by whom they themselves were slaughtered and carried away captive? Hence, nor is this all—No. Did not the idolatrous

nations, likewise, lay claim to revelation made by oracles, for all the different cruelties, slaughter, and blood-shed, carried on against both Jews and Christians, for despising and rejecting Paganism? Further, and to proceed,

In little more than the six first centuries of christianity, were raised no less than twenty-three different persecutions against the christians. See also the war carried on by the influence, and at the instigation of the Pope against the Albigensis and Waldensis; so that, even in France, alone, one million, or upwards, of these poor creatures perished, and fell sacrifices to the cruelty and blind zeal of Roman Catholics. And then after, from the first institution of the Jesuits in little more than thirty years, nine hundred thousand orthodox christians were slain. And in the Netherlands alone, the duke of Alva boasted, that within a few years he had dispatched to the amount of thirty-six thousand souls, and those all by the hand of the common executioner. And in the space of scarce thirty years, the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of tortures, one hundred and fifty thousand. Sanders himself confesses, that an innumerable multitude of Lollards and Sacramentarians were burnt throughout all Europe, who yet, he says, were not put to death by the Pope and Bishops, but by the civil magistrates. As for the rest, time would even fail me to repeat; for it would even swell a volume to remark them whose blood has been shed by those who have had the presumption to call themselves christians.

From hence, all these different persecutions, and blood that hath been shed that way, were always out of a pretence of their holding opinions contrary to their pretended revelations; but never one soul was ever yet hurt, either in person or interest, by such as perfectly understood the gospel of Christ.

Hence, How many millions of christians have been cruelly persecuted, tortured, and put to death by christians (*viz.* both Papists and Protestants) under the sanction of a pretended revelation? And also, what numbers of what they call infidels of all nations; and likewise in both the East and West Indies? Witness Mexico and Peru, where forty or fifty millions are said to have been slaughtered and put to death under the sanction of a pretended revelation. Hence, Have not likewise, all the different cruelties, slaughter, and bloodshed by Turks, or what they call Mahometans, been shed under a sanction of revelation? And not only this, but their empire was both founded by Mahomet, and carried on by his successors, under the sanction of a pretended revelation.

Now, Is it not, therefore, evident from the above, that all the different persecutions, cruel tortures, barbarities, and bloodshed, that have taken place in different nations, have been the effects of pretended revelations? Is it not, therefore, now evident, from the foregoing, that all the civil wars that ever were in the world, are not so much as to be compared, or even mentioned, to the barbarous cruelties and mas-

facres, that have been committed under a sanction of pretended revelations; and of what has accrued from the many religious claims made thereto by ignorant, superstitious, self-interested, and designing men.

Hence, I know not but that even hundreds of millions have been executed upon account of religion, and all under a sanction of divine authority, and for the glory of God, and the good of mankind. In short, there is almost no end of the massacres, tragedies, blood-shed, and other cruelties, which have accrued from that of an enthusiastic superstition—No; nor can any limits be set to the wretched abuse occasioned by its woful ambition.

From hence, there is nothing more evident than what may be understood from Christ, where he saith, “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth”—No: “I am not come to send peace, but a sword” or rather division: “For I am come to set a man at variance against his father; and the daughter against her mother; and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law: and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household.” What is here exprest, if conveyed to us as delivered by Jesus Christ, doth thereby indicate, through the various pretended revelations (in consistent with the moral attributes of God), ingrafted on the minds of mankind in their tender years, and bred up therein, that they, through the prejudice of education, would never admit of what was given and delivered by

him from God conformable to the divine will, but would, in opposition thereto, not only accuse, but even persecute to death, all such as did either receive or comply therewith: for whatever is just and conformable to the nature and attributes of God, and not contrary thereto, is what the world could never yet abide or dispense therewith.

JUD. That I verily believe; but we are told expressly by our priests, that we can refuse no part of what they call revelation without denying the whole; and if we do, we are thereby express Deists; and if Deists downright Atheists: for they assert, that without revelation there is no knowledge of God: which, in express words, to misbelieve, is to deny his existence.

GEN. No person, whether priest or layman, can possibly assert what you express, without declaring himself of less understanding than either: for if possesse but of as much judgment as to conceal his own ignorance of what he has expressed, he would certainly have known himself condemned by the apostle Paul, in that which is expressed of the Heathen world, Rom. i. 19, 20. "Because that which may be known
" of God is manifest in them; for God hath
" shewed it unto them. For the invisible
" things of him from the creation of the world
" are clearly seen, being understood by the
" things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without
" excuse." Of their being left without excuse, from beholding the visible things that

are made, is an incontestable evidence of the brutish ignorance of all such, whether priests or laymen, who express themselves as in the above. But further,

Now, Where is the boasted of advantages which they have, who believe in a pretended revelation (inconsistent with the moral attributes of God) above the Deist who acts conformable in life to the nature and will of God, as delivered unto us by Jesus Christ in the gospel? Hence, the one who trusts in a pretended revelation, inconsistent with the moral attributes of God, from the mistake thereof, persecutes, hates, and devours up the other; when, on the other hand, he that is a Deist, from a principle of sound knowledge, would not so much as hate or be hurtful to one human soul, or any thing else that pertains thereto.

Now, Is it not therefore evident, from the above, that whatever is conformable to the nature of God is certainly from him; but whatever is inconsistent therewith, though delivered by men under a pretended sanction of his authority falsely ascribed thereto, is not from him; which is too evident, as may be justly understood, from the different persecutions that proceed therefrom; which were certainly an infallible consequence inseparable from the above.

From hence, it follows, whatever is therefore conformable to the nature of God, may justly be said to have come from him for the reformation of men; but whatever will not

correspond with the rectitude of his nature, can never possibly come from him; which certainly appears evident, from the many bad effects remarked in the above.

JUD. You always use and employ your reason in judging of scripture; but you know very well, we are most strictly discharged by the priests against making use thereof, in considering the scriptures.

GEN. That I verily believe: and I think no great wonder though priests decry and exclaim against reason, and forbid people the use thereof, considering what they require of us to believe as infallible truth: for it is the express business of every one that is interested in a bad or villanous cause, to transport out of the way, if possible, those evidences which they are certain will make against them in discovering the fraud. Hence, as in the one, so does it exactly fare in the other: for, *ignis fatuus* lights shine best in the dark, and not before the sun: for no light is to be found therein, when compared or set before that bright and splendid luminary—No; neither is there any light, or reality in doctrines, wherein reason, that divine faculty, is discarded, despised, and set at naught; therefore, it is no wonder though reason be discharged as unprofitable, by such who deal in doctrines wherein the moral attributes of God are made to contradict each other, contrary to that heaven-appointed guide, before which they became as darkness, when compared, examined, and tried thereby. But however dark and

absurd that in which people believe contrary to the above text, it is an established maxim with almost all such as pretend to worship the true God, whether Mahometans, Jews, or Christians, though God is immutable and changeth not, they will rather his veracity should suffer in making his attributes contradict and thereby confound each other in disgrace thereof, than that what they believe as infallible inspiration (though merely of men), should fall into disrepute. Further, and to proceed,

For priests to require a belief of all contained in what they call the Old and New Testament being all divinely inspired, is what they have not so much as one syllable from either the Old or New Testament for the authority of requiring any such belief—No; nor precedent of which I know, but that idolatrous counsel held at Nice in the year 787, by the authority of Irene the empress, along with her son Constantine; who, by the advice of pope Hadrian for the re-establishing of image-worship, and where Tarsius bishop of Constantinople sat president, there anathematized all and every one who did not receive as authentic, but rejected as vain and unprofitable, whatever was wrote exclusive of scripture in favours of image-worship.

Now, since they have no authority from scripture, for holding all thereof as being divinely inspired, to which they apply the word “inspiration,” it must, therefore, be only that which is wrote exclusive of scripture (like

that sustained of by the above counsel in support of image-worship), on which they found and build their authority, of its being all infallibly inspired of God.

Hence, how greatly do I feel for the many different sects who tacitly submit, as beasts of burden, to be enslaved through the superstition of their enthusiastic priests; and are thereby shut up, as under chains of darkness, from the knowledge of truth, as conformable to the moral attributes of God. For such, I hereby contribute my mite for their deliverance, in order that each thereof may be set at liberty, and loosed from the chains wherewith they have been bound for so many centuries past by the foresaid gentlemen: for they not only anathematize, but also threaten with inevitable damnation, and send to hell, all such that would either reject or depart therefrom, if once they have received what they esteem as infallible. Thus they are no sooner fallen, through an implicit belief, as victims in the snare, than what they, from an eager ambition, love to triumph over them. Hence, one thing I would, therefore, ask, and is as follows. Who was it among the Jews that accused Christ, and put him to death? Was it not the priests, at the head of what they call the religious orthodox, *viz.* the Scribes and superstitious Pharisees? Most certainly. Nor was this blind or misguided zeal for the glory of God circumscribed to the Pharisees or orthodox among that people—No; but extends itself to said rank, in every religion, or religious sect, in

all different nations and ages whatever. For an incontestable proof thereof, Was it not out of a pretended zeal for the glory of God, that the Jewish priests put Christ to death? Certainly it was the priests, at the head of that orthodox band, as in the above. And also, when Pilate was willing to have released him, Was it not by the influence of that woful, and foul-destroying band, or set of men, the priests, whereby the populace were influenced to desire Pilate to release unto them Barabbas (who was both a thief, robber, and a murderer), in order that Jesus, who both taught and practised the best of morals, might be crucified and put to death?

Further, as observed by a celebrated author, "Rancour, malice, and cruelty, never rage more violently, than under the mask of religion."

Hence, Is it not, therefore, now evident, from the above, that wherever this persecutive spirit is to be found, which acts under the cover of a pretended zeal for the glory of God, it cannot possibly come from him? No; but from a different or counterfeit spirit, set up in opposition to that which is divine. Now, Is there not a set of men to be found in almost every church, who do not only stile and imagine themselves the orthodox, but also pretend to be the only lights in support thereof. These are they (with whom that malignant spirit, as observed in the above, resides) whose chief care and ambition is to keep the world in dark-

ness, through the blind zeal of an unbounded superstition. But, with respect to revelation, one thing deserves our particular notice, and is as follows. If all that is either spoke or wrote, by such persons as are said to have been inspired, is to be sustained as infallible, as in the foregoing, the whole, therefore, express'd by Balaam, after the report of his being inspired with prophecy, must, on the same principles, be admitted as infallible also, *viz.* his advising Balack to pervert Israel. Hence, if all is admitted as divine inspiration, that, no doubt, must pass amongst the rest; and has no occasion, as being too much of a piece, to be detached from the rest.

JUD. But the Jewish revelation, with that of inspiration, was attested by miracles.

GEN. If the most learned Huetius gives us a true account of things in what he relates, there are no miracles in the Bible, but many of the like nature are to be found in Pagan histories. Therefore, it is in vain to have recourse to miracles; for God, in the Old Testament, is said to suffer miracles to be done by false prophets, in order to prove his people; and in the New, such miracles as would, if it were possible, deceive the very elect, Matth. xxiv. 24.: for no test under heaven can be a proof of a religion being divine, but of its being expressly conformable to the moral attributes of God; without which, miracles are no test of its divinity, or of God's being the Author thereof. But further, having pro-

ceeded thus far, I shall, therefore, add as follows.

Hence, there is no religion in the world, whether Jew or Gentile, but what is said, by them that hold it, to have been revealed to them at first, either by the god or gods whom they pretend to serve. For instance, the great Diana at Ephesus is said to be the image that fell down from Jupiter. In short, all but what is delivered to us by Jesus Christ, his apostles, and others conformable thereto, are nothing else than the produce of priest-craft.

Thus far I have endeavoured, under Almighty God, and aid of his divine Spirit, to deliver mankind from the gross delusions, imposed on them by priests, in order to keep them in ignorance, or rather what we may call thick darkness, by their tacitly submitting to the gross insults which are imposed on their understandings by the above gentlemen.

JUD. Do you know what it is to expose the religion of a country?

GEN. If the religion thereof be right (as all nations, whether Heathens, Mahometans, Roman Catholics, Protestants, and others, positively believe they are), it would certainly be unjust; but if wrong, it is a most glorious heroism to detect and expose it. For if the religion of a country is not to be attacked or spoke against, each of the above, whether Heathen, Mahometan, Roman Catholic, or what not, must certainly, therefore, abide as they are: and if they must abide as they are,

it would certainly be wicked to speak against them.

Lastly, One thing I cannot but remark, how fond people are in their being kept in darkness; and what an aversion they have against light. Hence, a thief is no more afraid of the rising sun, than what people, *viz.* the populace, are against knowledge. Strange! yea, a very strange infatuation indeed! of people being so grossly infatuated, as to collect sums of money, and give to others (what they call learned men) to keep themselves in darkness.

Hence, instead of people making choice of knowledge, they even willingly contribute and pay men to keep them in ignorance.

From hence, not only millions, but the sums are immense, which have been levied under a sanction of profound piety in support of religion; when, instead of what people ignorantly suppose, it is nothing more than to the expulsion of truth. And though all believe that what they launch out is expended in supplying the gospel, it is, in express terms (however confident in what they maintain), only paying men, *viz.* priests, in garnishing the grave-stones under which it is buried; and thereby dupe the simple, in serving them with the shadow in place of the substance.

Further, to this we may add as follows. The ignorance of the laity is therefore, no doubt, the advantage of the clergy in every nation, religion, and denomination of men,

But that of superstition, with which religion is so much leavened through the artifice of priests, is certainly, of all others, the most unconquerable, and unfurmountable bar against knowledge.

Hence, of all enemies to real or true knowledge, that of superstition is certainly the greatest: for it will admit of no increase beyond the limited sphere of its infernal darkness, *viz.* the dominion of its uncircumscribed ambition.

But, to conclude this dialogue; if we should add any thing as necessary to our belief of the gospel, or christian system, it is just as much as to believe, that what is contained therein, is insufficient of itself to complete our salvation independent of said addition: for if we should add thereunto, and require a belief as infallible in all that has been wrote before the gospel system, we may, therefore, just as well add and require, as infallible, an unquestionable belief in all that is wrote after it, the Alcoran not excepted.

JUD. With respect to the Old Testament, I shall beg leave to observe as follows. Were not the Jews God's covenanted people?

GEN. They were no doubt told and made to believe so by their priests, that God had chosen, and thereby entered into covenant with them; but there is no room to suppose that ever God made a covenant either with the Jews, or any other people under heaven, since he gave being to matter.

JUD. I am sure we are told otherwise by the prophets, who exprest themselves in cor-

roboration with the above, that God made a new covenant with the people, *viz.* the Jews: and the word “new” still implies an old.

GEN. Though the prophets spoke against Judaism, they exprest themselves in a great measure, in what they call prophecy, merely as other men, when not thoroughly divested of the prejudice of education. But with respect to the received opinion, that God made either an old or a new covenant with that or any other people, it is a downright fiction and fabrication of priests, imposed on the ignorance of the laity: for if as exprest by either of the above, *viz.* prophets or priests, Jesus Christ, in declaring to us the will of God, had certainly known and told us thereof; but that he nowhere has; it therefore never existed but in the floating imaginations of priests, and fantastical brains of enthusiastic visionaries. People may, indeed, make covenant with God; but there is no room to suppose that God makes covenant with them—No, there is not.

JUD. But are we to misbelieve the prophets who foretold so many wonderful events; among which, is that exprest in Isaiah xxxviii, concerning Hezekiah, of the sun going backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahas for a sign of his recovery; and of fifteen years being added to his life?

GEN. There is much recorded in Isaiah, as well as in the other prophets, not wrote by him, nor them whose names are ascribed thereto. For instance, this whole chapter, with others, and much more in said book, are wrote by the

third person, and not by the first; as is evident from both the 1, and 21. verses thereof: "For
" Ifaiah had said," not I said, " Let them take
" a lump of figs, and lay it for a plaster upon
" the bile, and he shall recover."

DIALOGUE II.

On Revelation.

AFTER having finished the foregoing discourse, Judaizer begins again as follows.

I understand, said he, from our last, you are no great friend to revelation. Gentile replies thus.

That, said he, which was delivered by Jesus Christ and his apostles conformable thereto, with others of like nature, whether before or after, I heartily esteem and approve of as from God; but whatever will not conform with the above test, that I positively reject as altogether vain and unprofitable to us, though represented as infallible, by ignorant and designing men. For proof thereof " The Mahometans absolutely deny of the Koran being composed by their prophet himself, or any other for him. Hence, it being their general and orthodox belief, that the whole of said book is of divine original; nay, that it is even eternal and uncreated; remaining, as some thereof express it, in the very essence of God.

That the first transcript has been from everlasting by God's throne, written on a table of vast bigness called the preserved table; in which are also recorded the divine decrees, past and future. A full and complete copy from this table in one volume, on paper, was, by the ministry of the angel Gabriel, sent down to the lowest heaven, in the month of Ramadan, on the night of power. From whence Gabriel revealed it to Mahomet by parcels; some at Mecca, and some at Medina, at different times during the space of twenty-three years, as the exigency of affairs required: giving him, however, the consolations to shew him the whole (which they tell us was bound in silk, and adorned with gold and precious stones of paradise) once a-year; but in the last year of his life, he had the favour of seeing it twice." Further, and to proceed,

"It is the established belief of the Sonnites, or orthodox, that the Koran is uncreated and eternal, subsisting in the very essence of God; and Mahomet himself is said to have pronounced him an infidel who asserted the contrary. Another sect held of its being created; therefore, accused the assertors of infidelity, as believing in two eternal beings. This point was controverted with so much heat, that it occasioned many calamities under some of the Caliphs; some of which party, who held its being uncreated, were quite imprisoned, persecuted, and put to death by the opposite party, and died martyrs in confirmation of this belief. But, in order to put an end to these

bloody contests, the government revoked the former edict, leaving every man or person at liberty as to their belief in this point."

Further, by what has been said, the reader may easily believe, that this book is in the greatest reverence and esteem among the Mahometans. "They dare not so much as touch it, without being first washed or legally purified. 'Lest they should touch it through inadvertency, they write these words on the cover or label, "Let none touch it but they who are clean." And if even a Mussulman, with unwashen hands, or a Christian were to touch it, they would immediately be put to death. They read it with great care and respect, never holding it below their girdles. They swear by it, consult it on their weighty occasions, carry it with them to war (the same as the Jews did their ark or wooden god), write sentences of it in their banners, adorn it with gold and precious stones, and knowingly suffer it not to be in the possession of any of a different persuasion. The Jews also have the same veneration for their law, not daring to touch it with unwashen hands; nor then, neither, without a cover."

Hence, I would to God that these palpable and glaring ensigns of superstition and brutish ignorance, of infallibility in believing what is not only inconsistent with the rectitude of God, but even diametrically opposite to his very essence (to have been required, delivered, and to have come from him), had been circum-

scribed to Turks and Jews, and not 'to have reached unto us in believing Judaism to be of divine authority: for without dissimulation, there appears, as observed by a celebrated author, to have proceeded from the descendants of Abraham two great impostors, different from one another, *viz.* Moses and Mahomet: the one from Isaac, and the other from Ishmael; both of whose religions and conquests which took place under a pretended authority of the true God, are founded in blood; refusing to give quarters to any, but to such as submitted thereto. And what was even worst of all in both, the whole of their procedure, in what they did, was effected under a pretended sanction of God's authority, in putting infidels to death, as not having a right to either life or effects. But the intention of both these leaders was, in order that they might seize on their inheritances.

JUD. I would not that you should balance and class Moses with Mahomet: for the great victories that the Israelites gained in conquering the Canaanites, and of their taking possession of that land, are a proof of the whole thereof having been given them of God; and not to have been effected merely by the command of Moses and valour of Joshua, as has been supposed by some.

GEN. If the great slaughter and victories gained over the Canaanites be a proof of Moses having been commanded by God to destroy the Canaanitish nations, on purpose that the Israelites might inherit their land, this evidence

you advance in proof of Moses having been directed of God, cannot possibly be circumscribed to Moses alone.—No; but likewise includes Mahomet; and will prove, that whatever degrees of conquests that impostor made under a pretended authority of a revelation he had from God, his mission is just all that number of degrees more divine than that of Moses.

JUD. But Moses told them beforehand, that the land of Canaan was given to them for a possession.

GEN. If Moses' promising and telling the Israelites (to encourage them) that the land was given to them for an inheritance; if according to what he exprest be a proof of his mission being divine, Mahomet by assuring his followers of their great victories, not only over Arabia with that of Assyria, but likewise the conquests of both Greece and Persia, which exactly came to pass in less than one century, must therefore, according to said extent of conquests, be just all that more divine than that of Moses: for what you advance in favours of the one does exactly prove the other: for both of which pretended the highest authority of the true God for what they advanced. But where is the falsehood, but what men may claim God's authority in confirmation thereof?

JUD. But we are expressly told in the Jewish history, that the land was given unto them.

GEN. The Turks may, in every respect, with as good grace, as promised by Mahomet,

assert, that all their acquisitions were given unto them: and not only the Turks, but all nations may, on the same basis, assert of their conquests being given unto them of God, in every respect, as much as the Jews: for if the land was given to them of God, namely the seven nations of Canaan (as ignorantly believed by that people, and others, in every respect as ignorant as themselves), according to the received opinion, though only effected through the mere influence and political device of their leaders, How comes it to pass of some of these nations having inhabited the land contrary to God's (or rather their leaders) decree, and also in spite of the Israelites themselves, until the reign of David? For we are told, 2 Sam. v. that the Jebusites were only expelled therefrom by that prince, *viz.* David, near five hundred years after Moses' death. And not only the Jebusites having remained therein till that period, but we understand from Ezra, chap. ix. 10. that the land was inhabited in part by those of the seven nations, till after the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, as is evident from said author. And if remaining in the land till after that period, we have no reason to doubt (that as the Jews lived for the future in subjection to other nations, during the period of that state or polity the same as the ten tribes, from the time of their being carried away by Salmanazer king of Assyria), that if not extruded before, but they would remain undisturbed to the end, and perhaps till after the Jews were totally expelled therefrom by

Titus. Which, if actually decreed, as in the above, by an absolute donation of God to the sons of Jacob, could never possibly, contrary to his decree, have been the case as believed by that people, and others as ignorant as themselves—No, not possible. For if decreed of God, as we are induced to believe from that history, it would shew a weakness in God as if unable to accomplish what he intended: for we are told from different parts of said history, that God promised and gave them the land of Canaan for ever, and for an everlasting possession; but of this we are certified to the contrary, of no such promise having come from God: for not one soul of that people has possessed one foot-breadth of said land they call their own, for near two thousand years past.

Hence, of this we may be fully assured, God cannot possibly lie, falsify, nor contradict himself; therefore, cannot possibly have come from him; or they had never been expelled therefrom.

JUD. But they forfeited their right to Canaan, and were cast out therefrom, by sinning against God.

GEN. That is all the apology they made in cutting off and expelling the Canaanites; therefore, Canaan, and every other nation, must have been given to the inhabitants thereof for ever, and for an everlasting possession, according to the above; which expressly overthrows all that has been exprest of its having been promised, and given by God to Israel for an everlasting possession: for the expression

“for ever” includes every other nation, if acting agreeable to the will of God, in every respect, as much as Israel. But further, and to proceed,

With respect to the land of Canaan having been promised and given to the Israelites, I shall therefore observe as follows. The people, after being led out of Egypt by Moses, refused to go up and invade the land he had promised them on their departure from Egypt; but, Moses finding himself disappointed in making good his promise to that people, apologizes, on his coming short of putting them in possession thereof. And after having accused them for not going up to invade Canaan, suspendeth the accomplishment of said promise for the space of forty years; a year for each day in which they were in searching the land; a period, indeed, he could not, according to the course of nature, expect to survive; but would, no doubt, be gone before it came to pass, and thereby get rid in making out of said promise. But Moses, in his prolongation of life beyond expectation, finding the time of making good his promise to that people drawing near, and just upon the approach of its second accomplishment, and lest being again disappointed, not daring from what he had experienced, Num. xiv. to run a second risk of putting them in possession thereof, in the very last month of said period, *viz.* forty years, to get rid of which promise, makes his escape to Jethro his father-in-law, priest of Midian, or some other land; and having made

his exit, never again returned thither. But the writer of said history, to apologize for Moses' elopement, says, "He died in the land of Moab; and was buried by the Lord in a valley of that country," *viz.* Moab, "and no person knew of his sepulchre unto this day."

Further, and, in order to strengthen the expectations of that people, we are told by said writer, of Moses having went up to mount Nebo, to the top of Pisga in the land of Moab, and of the Lord having communed with him, and there shewed him the whole of Canaan; which the Lord, according to the historian, had promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and had given it to them and to their seed for an everlasting possession; and that Moses died there, and was buried in the land of Moab; and that no person knew of his sepulchre unto this day. The words "unto this day" tell us, as observed elsewhere, of this book not being wrote for long after Moses' death; and how many centuries after his decease we know not. But, how, in the name of wonder, could the writer thereof, since Moses never returned, but died in the mount, and was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, know the tenour of the Lord's discourse in conferring with Moses, or in giving him a view of the land of Canaan, and of his promise to them, and also of Moses' death and burial, when he himself, after being dead, could never again possibly return to give an account thereof? Or, how could the writer know of

the Lord having digged Moses' grave, and of his burying him in the land of Moab, when no person knows of his sepulchre unto this day? Strange! yea, a very strange circumstance indeed! that the writer should have known of the above, when no person could possibly know or give him an account thereof; but this, like the rest of said history, when properly considered, does actually appear no less than a downright insult upon the understandings of mankind.

From hence, Is it not, therefore, astonishing, that priests should have the presumption to require of people to believe therein for divine truth?

JUD. But the land of Palestine was promised to Abraham some hundred years before Moses, and also to both Isaac and Jacob.

GEN. Yes; according to the Jewish tradition, which was not wrote for more than eight hundred years, and perhaps nigh two thousand; therefore cannot, in the smallest degree, be depended upon for truth; therefore (mark this), they must certainly have only borrowed the authority of the just and true God, for cutting off and destroying these nations and people, in order that they might seize on their inheritance. But God, as a public mark of his displeasure for falsely ascribing his authority for such acts of impiety, has not only expelled them the land, but has ever since, as it were, denied them the property of so much as of one foot-breadth of earth, they can either inherit or call their own.

Hence, How astonishing is it, that men should ascribe the authority of God for such arrant falsehoods? However wicked it is to mix with the brutal tribes, it is, in every respect, more so to blend such horrid falsehoods as that of Judaism with the gospel of Christ: for the produce thereof is nothing more than only a mere mongrel species, which, by partaking of both, is neither the one nor the other, *viz.* Jew nor Christian.

Further, with respect to Judaism or Jewish system, concerning the history of that people, in a word, I know nothing under heaven more parallel than Jacob's black, spotted, and ring-streaked flock (of which he outwitted his father-in-law), and those of his posterity. They for certain were, no doubt, a black, speckled, and ring-streaked race, both in life and religion: for a white sheep, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others such as they, and likewise Jesus Christ, had no sooner appeared among that people, than, on account of rejecting their black, their speckled, and ring-streaked practices of life and religion; they and such as they not being of the same colour with themselves, they immediately put them to death.

Hence, there is no piece of injustice or cruelty can possibly be so great, but what they (*viz.* Jews and proselytes to Judaism) can, with all manner of confidence, ascribe the operation or requiring thereof to God, in order to gain its authority. And it is to my certain knowledge, that such acts of injustice, for which

they ascribe the sanction of God's authority, are utterly gross to be ascribed to the devil; therefore, ten thousand times less to be evened to God. Yea, and there is no end of the actions and requirings, for which they have the assurance to ascribe the sanction of God's authority thereto, as in the above.

Hence, in a word, one would suppose it almost impossible that ever one, in their right mind, could admit of such an absurd fiction, or rather fictions, to have entered into a human brain, as those contained in Judaism, and of which their history consists. Hence, however much evil there is for one person to counterfeit the authority of another in support of falsehood, however much God is greater than man, it is therefore, in every respect, just all that greater evil to borrow his name, or counterfeit his authority, in support of that which he never commanded.

Now, what was it that made both Jews and also Mahometans obtain to such conquests, but only by virtue, and through the influence of their leaders, *viz.* of Moses and Mahomet, certifying to the people that God had actually given these lands to them for to possess; and thereby inspired them with the utmost degree of victory, in vanquishing and expelling the inhabitants who dwelt therein, *viz.* the different nations, as promised them in the above: for it is exprest in Genesis, that God told Abraham that he would give unto him, and to his seed after him, the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession, and even for ever. But

this, we are assured, has by no means come to pass: for it is longer by far since dispossessed of said land, than the whole time of their being in possession thereof; which may certainly teach us, of no such promise having come from God. But further, I shall therefore add as follows.

I know some, in confirmation of Judaism being of divine institution, and of that people having been singled out by God to keep up the remembrance of his name among the nations, have therefore alledged, and that not without some plausibility, of their having been kept a people distinct from all other nations, ever since they existed unto this present. But this, when properly considered, is no proof thereof at all—No: for they oft-times became idolaters, the same as other nations among whom they lived. Hence, one great and particular reason of their having kept themselves a distinct people, as in the above, was their idolatry (and other great wickedness), of which they were guilty; for which they were sent into captivity in Babylon, and there punished on account of their iniquities, as well as other nations which were guilty of like vices with themselves; so that, against idolatry, they, for the future, had such an aversion, that they never again returned thereto. But the particular cause of their remaining a distinct people is as follows.

Though the rest of the nations borrowed the authority of their idol gods in support of their

superstitions, imposed on them by their priests, whenever the falsehood thereof was detected, the superstition built thereon immediately fell into disrepute. But, when the authority of the true God has been ascribed in support of a religious superstition, such as that of the Jews and Mahometans, his authority never falling into disrepute, the authenticity of their superstition is thereby continued, as infallible, without interruption; and this is the reason why both Jews and Mahometans remain distinct from the other nations. For proof thereof, see the religion set forth and established in Persia by Zoroastres, for which he ascribed the authority of the true God in support thereof; and that, too, before ever the Israelites were a people: numbers of whom in bodies, *viz.* the Zoroastreans, remain as distinct in their religion in Asia (though not of clans like the Israelitish tribes), as the Jews do unto this day. And if the religion of that people, *viz.* the Jews, because of its remaining unadulterated, be a proof of its being from God, it will prove the christian, by reason of its adulteration, not to have come from God. But the reason why the religion of the Jews remains unadulterated, since their dispersion among the nations, is, because of its not being established by law: this is no more than what is evident from both the christian and ancient Jewish state. For if once the priests get the authority, by having the sanction of the civil power to support their innovations, there is no church proof against being adulterated through the corruptions of these confe-

crated gentlemen; which has ever been the case, in all ages: and also, whatever was required by the state, whether anciently among the Jews, or those of the christian nations, was always complied with by the priests.

And of their continuing a distinct people from those of other nations, no nation (not only from their former, but present behaviour, as being a set of sharpers, always going about to cheat and deceive their neighbours) durst ever yet give them a property they could call their own. And not only this, but from said behaviour, can never make long stay in any one place, but are obliged, like their ancestors, to make escape and fly to another, always seeking whom or whose substance they may devour. All of which may teach us why they are not ranked among the nations, but wander about from one place to another, just like what they really are.

But the only reason, as appears to me, of their being kept by God as a distinct people from the rest of the nations, in not being intermixed therewith, is their borrowing his authority for such notorious falsehoods: for which he has, therefore, reserved them as a lasting monument among the nations unto this day.

JUD. A black character, indeed! But not to dwell thereon, you speak of our religion as being altogether corrupted and eaten up by priests.

GEN. Yes, certainly by them alone and not another.

JUD. But if priests should be removed,

What then would become of the church? People would, no doubt, become irreligious if left without guides.

GEN. If priests were not subject to, and overawed by the civil authority, men would not be safe in either soul, body, or effects. And as to men becoming irreligious without priests, the quakers are an incontestable proof of the contrary: for that people employ no priests; and yet are, of all others, the most sober and civilized people in Christendom; and, as it were, even proof against all different vices and out-breakings of other denominations thereof. Hence, they are sober and just in the whole of their conversation; and are at a word in all their dealings: they will not swear, nor go to war, nor fight in private quarrels, or even bear any carnal weapons. In short, they are a quiet inoffensive people, of exemplary morals, remarkably charitable and friendly to each other, and have never yet been guilty of persecution, like those of other denominations, though they have even had it in their power; neither are there better subjects in any nation, than they. In short, they, in refraining the above vices, shame every denomination who are guilty thereof, and yet have the presumption to call themselves christians.

And as to the priests being the promoters or propagators of wisdom, the press, and the liberty thereof, is of incomparably more utility to the diffusing of knowledge abroad, and spread of understanding for the use and good of society, than all the priests in the world: for if it had

not been the press, and a toleration thereof, we had been kept in darkness, as beasts of burden unto this present. But many, if not all, of what they call christians, believe of their being carried to heaven, or transported thither, merely by virtue of the clergy; but in this they deceive themselves, and are only, by trusting thereto, dreaming themselves thither upon hearsay. But he that would wish to inherit heaven, must, certainly, walk in the way that leads thereunto, and go upon his own bottom appointed of God, or need never expect to reach and possess the mansions of blest: for no person is fit for heaven but such as have a right to serve themselves of the privileges and duties that lead thereunto: for we are by no means to suppose that the path that leads to happiness, and eternal or everlasting blest, is more holy than heaven itself, or mansions thereof—No, we by no means are.

From hence, let no person, therefore, falsely imagine and thereby deceive himself, or believe that the keys of heaven are hung or tied to the priests girdle—No, they are not: for heaven is alike open to all that love to walk in the way that leads thereunto.

JUD. From this, I now begin to tremble.

GEN. Why are you dismayed or seized with terror?

JUD. The reason why; the priests, on supposing their interest attacked, will give the alarm and cry out, as with one voice, The church (though nothing more than the craft) is in danger!

GEN. Error, falsehood, and deceit, indeed, may, but truth, though maltreated as such, never possibly can. But further, and to return,

I shall, therefore, add as follows. Whoever they be, whether person or people, who are guilty in being hurtful to others, either in person, interest, or estate, because differing from them in opinion, though of better morals than they, are just, in every respect, while they retain such a disposition, as distant from Christ's religion, or of having a right thereto, as the brutes that perish: for such have not only the mark of the beast wrote, but even engraven on their foreheads.

Hence, they who would murder and put one another to death upon account of their religious opinions, are incomparably worse than the rapacious part of the brutal tribes, who kill the simple part of creation merely for the sake of carnage; but they, out of mere devilry, kill that which they cannot use. And also, whatever nation or people are guilty of carrying on an offensive war against another, or any thing more than a defensive, do thereby forfeit and renounce their right to Christ's religion; and therefore have no right to the name christian, because acting diametrically opposite to what Christ himself hath commanded. But, to return,

As to the difference and authorities of the Turkish and Jewish Alcorans, the Turkish, however absurd, was, no doubt, wrote by Mahomet and his constituents, or rather his

assistants, in the beginning or rise of their empire; but the Jewish, which consists of the reveries and superstition of priests, composed of mere fabulous tradition, was wrote, by whom we know not, only in the latter part or towards the close of their state, as appears evident from said history.

Further, but with respect to the above fabulous history recorded by the Jews and Jewish priests, including that of Judaism, since abolished by an express act of the apostolic synod, and authority of the Holy Spirit, as observed elsewhere, is with what we Gentile Christians, and even the Jews themselves, since loosed from the observation thereof, have nothing to do, either as to believe of its being appointed of God, or that we should implicitly give head or rely thereon for truth—No: for if we should give credit thereto after its abolishment, this would be to establish that which God had positively set at naught; and to believe therein, after abolished as in the above, is downright infidelity. Hence, and for us to believe and give credit to an old religion or supposed revelation, which is pregnant with contradictions, inconsistent with the moral attributes of God, after abolished by a second or new religion conformable thereto, *viz.* his moral attributes, is express Deism. For if we who believe in the new shall believe in the old, after abolished by the new, this, in express words, would be to disbelieve the authority of the new by which it was abolished. And if we who

believe in the new shalt believe in the old, we thereby actually misbelieve what we pretend to believe in, *viz.* the new: for to believe in that which is abolished, contrary to that in which we pretend to believe by which it was abolished, is the blackest of Deism, which is worse than Atheism; therefore, if we believe, as in the above, we are not only Deists, but even the blackest of Deists, by reason of our believing contrary to that in which we actually pretend to believe.

But further, upon this subject, we are told expressly, that God is immutable, and changeth not; the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Now, since God is immutable, as in the above, How comes he sometimes (if true) to reveal himself under express contradictions; whereby his moral attributes are set at enmity, and thereby made to confound each other; such as commanding one thing, and requiring the performance of a second, diametrically opposite thereto?

JUD. God is Sovereign; therefore, may command one thing to-day, and a contrary to-morrow.

GEN. Will God's sovereignty rectify and convert changeability into immutability?

JUD. No, certainly not.

GEN. To believe that God is immutable and changeth not; yet, though immutable, may, because Sovereign, command one thing to-day and a contrary to-morrow, is actually to believe of his being mutable, and thereby oppose and mistrust God; which, to misbelieve

him, is exprefs Deism (or rather infidelity) and that of the deepest die. Now, he who believes of God being immutable, yet, because Sovereign, may command one thing to-day and a contrary to-morrow, is, therefore, a Deist (if not an infidel); and even not only a Deist, but the blackest of Deists, or rather infidels; and may be distinguished under two classes, *viz.* black and white Deists. They who believe that God reveals nothing to our knowledge of him are white Deists; and they who believe God to be immutable, and yet, because Sovereign, may command exprefs contradictions, are the black or worst of Deists, or rather infidels: for to believe that God is immutable, and yet, though immutable, may command one thing to-day and a contrary to-morrow, is to believe in no God at all; which is exprefs Atheism. And for men to believe and ascribe God's authority for doctrines wherein he is expressly made appear to contradict and thereby confound himself, is worse than Atheism: for to believe that, because God is Sovereign, he may therefore command one thing to-day, and an exprefs contrary to-morrow, leaves no bounds to the infinite mischiefs and wickedness for which people may and have falsely ascribed God's authority; such as in putting to death kings, nations, and even individuals, with infants and sucklings: all of which has already taken place; and, from the same cause may, with numberless other mischiefs of like nature, contrary to the moral attributes of God, be repeated over and o-

ver again, to the abolishing of his immutability; which is infinitely worse than to believe there is no God at all.

Hence, nor is the above doctrine circumscribed to a corner—No: for the greatest part of mankind, *viz.* the populace, believe things merely because of their being said (by priests) to be divine; but the other, *viz.* the fewest thereof, believe not on mere report, but only in that which actually is divine,

But further, with respect to the foregoing, when once men have arrived at such a degree of impiety as to abolish and set at naught the immutability of God by virtue of his sovereignty, there is no piece of injustice nor act of cruelty can possibly be so great, but what they may, with impunity, ascribe God's authority for the commission thereof. And it is by virtue of the above doctrine, in abolishing God's immutability, that the many bloody persecutions and dreadful massacres (wherein millions have suffered the most extreme tortures, and were cruelly put to death) took place, and derived their birth. But, to return,

Having thus far proceeded in speaking with respect to the uncertainty of a great part of what passes among thousands for what they call revelation, and the idle vanity of depending thereon for truth, I shall, therefore, add, as observed by a celebrated author on that or a like subject; which is as follows.

“ If we enquire how most of those things that are handed down to us by tradition have happened, and how those which are now in

vogue are like to be transmitted to posterity, we shall easily discover, that the prejudices of our youth, and a laziness inherent to a great many persons, are the two principal sources of the popular opinions, pious fables, and romantic stories, which are told us; and whose truth is fathered upon tradition. There is nobody who has not experienced, that, when he was young, he heard a long train of stories in his family, whose falsehood and folly he has been sensible of since he grew up to manhood. All mothers and grand-mothers have a thousand pious rhapsodies, and as many false anecdotes of their family, which they tattle in the ears of their children. They certify lying stories with so much assurance of truth, that most people cannot but remember and believe some of them. When their children are arrived at a certain age, they transmit to them what they again, in their turn, take care to convey to posterity. Thus, from age to age, every family perpetuates, in their descendents, a certain number of lies, which pass for the historical chronology of the house. Every province, and every city, has its particular errors; and the people that live there are generally tainted with them. They communicate the impressions that they receive in their youth, and mutually fortify themselves, in their belief, by the unanimous consent of all those to whom they are nearest allied. Nobody durst undertake to undeceive them in an opinion which passes for a rule of faith amongst them; and it would be running too great a

risk to oppose certain prejudices too vigorously. I heard a friend of mine, a gentleman of probity and credit, say, that he had like to have been pulled in pieces by the populace of St. Maximin, for saying that Mary Magdalen never came into Province; and that it was not her body that was preserved in their church. What do you think it is, Madam, says he, that so thoroughly persuades the inhabitants of St. Maximin, that they possess the relics of Mary Magdalen? It is the monks who belong to that church, and amass great riches by that story. I do not enter into a discussion of the fact, whether or not Mary Magdalen died in Province, or in Judea; but I assert, that let the thing be as it will, the monks have great reason to maintain that they have her relics. How many pious traditions have no other source, no other support, than the private interest of some particular person? How many errors and superstitions would be banished from the earth, could one banish self-interest, and the love of riches? Laziness and indolence, vices so common to the greatest part of mankind, are also great upholders of tradition. Men had rather believe a thing that is told them for a truth, than prove whether it be so or not by a fatiguing examination and painful study. It is much more easy to follow the current of things. Thus most people suffer themselves to be carried by the stream; and are thereby ingulfed in error, from the examples of others. Whoever has a mind to be cured of his blindness must follow the pre-

cept of Seneca, and separate himself from the vulgar croud."

"Further, if we examine into the first origin of many traditions, we shall see that they often spring from some accidental thought of a poet or orator. Homer's gods were the occasion of all the fabulous stories which were invented from time to time, on that subject, by the Pagans. As soon as the mob receive the first impression of any superstition, they are continually adding new chimeras to the first; and all those stories, passing to posterity, gain great authority, by length of time, in the weak and ignorant. Nay, in process of time, there will be authors found, who, by their writings, will authorize the false traditions, and record them in their books, as certain facts that have been acknowledged as truth for many ages."

"Hence, many historians thus authorize facts, which never had any reality but in the poets brains; who are permitted to forge and invent facts, or alter the truth to serve their purpose."

"There are besides a great many popular notions, and ancient traditions, that have no other foundation than the imagination of the painters. In the times of ignorance, from the ninth to the fifteenth century, the monks had very few churches, but what had the image or effigy of some saint that wrought miraculous things. These images were the most certain revenue and support of convents and monasteries. Reason and learning, which appear

ed again after they had been so long disused, had the same effect upon these pretended miracles, that the coming of the Messiah had upon oracles: they made them cease; and many people, beginning to open their eyes, and perceiving the credulity of their predecessors, came to be entirely cured of their error. Yet, for all this, a great number still continued in the ancient belief; either through obstinacy not to see the truth, or because their prejudices hindered them from making use of their reason. They retained in their minds all the foolish fancies that took place in their youth; and transmitted them to their posterity, from whence they are descended to us. This was the rise of a thousand odd notions, which have been often hunted down of late times, but are not yet quite destroyed. From the same source sprang many of the pious superstitions, that the prudence and wisdom of our last bishops have caused to be laid aside."

"Hence, I shall, therefore, finish these reflections concerning the uncertainty of tradition, by remarking to you, that it has an influence upon all people, and upon all religions in the world. The Mahometans, the Jews, and the Pagans, have their traditions, which they believe to be certain and true: they are upheld, as ours are, by antiquity and a religious superstition. Why, then, should we make ours more authentic than theirs? And, what reason have we to urge, that they should quit their notions, and seriously examine whether or not they are not contrary to reason and

good sense? Seeing we refuse to observe the same rule, one law ought to bind us all."

"From hence, we ought not to require that of others, which we are unwilling to submit to ourselves. If we think ourselves exempted from examining our sentiments, and opinions that are founded upon tradition, or certain religious principles, the Turks and Jews ought to enjoy the same privilege. There is no room to doubt, but in all religions, there are some people of sincerity, who believe that only which they profess; because they are persuaded that all others are wrong."

"Now, if the means of examining opinions be forbid, a Turk, as observed elsewhere, is no more obliged to explain his sentiments than we are:—and this forbidding to examine into opinions, which we receive by our education, has plunged all nations, as well as our own, into the belief of false prejudices. By this means, religion is made the protectress of old wives fables, and monkish inventions. Hence, truth needs never be afraid of clear day light: if an opinion grounded upon tradition be true, it becomes the more venerable, when it is acknowledged and approved of by people that will not countenance a lie. I cannot put an end to these reflections better, than by reciting a passage from a famous author, who proves evidently, that tradition is too weak, uncertain, and doubtful, to clear up the truth of a contested fact. "The Pagans, says this judicious writer, insulted the first

christians; on account of the smallness of their number; and opposed to them their antiquity, and the general suffrage of innumerable nations. The church of Rome made use of this artillery against Luther and Calvin: the Protestants make use of the same against every new sect that springs up from them. This is a very easy method of refuting innovations. By this, a tedious course of controversy is cut short. This way of prescription spares all the fatigues of an examination: for people let go enquiries, even with regard to a point of fact, on the authority of antiquity, and a long supposed usage. They fall in plump with the public voice. All this indulges human laziness vastly; and therefore men defend themselves with this argument on all occasions: and for once that it may be of any service to truth, it is an hundred times the support of falsehood. Complaints have been made in all ages, of the ill effects of a blind credulity, which trusts only to fabulous traditions. Lucretius said, eighteen hundred years ago, that mankind were oppressed under the heavy burden of superstition: many have since his time, and many complain of the same still."

"Hence, the authority of the learned, and the reputation they have acquired, ought not to impose upon our reason: great men have always been subject to human failings, and many times erred from the way of truth:—their passions, prejudices, vanity, and self-interest have been the source of most of their opinions. For this cause, we ought to examine

their opinions with care, and try them by the rules of the light of nature; and see whether or not they be not contrary to reason, before we adopt and receive them as true. By reading good books in this manner, we shall make a real improvement; and though demonstrate to us evidently but a few things, yet these few things will be of more service to us, than a great number of facts advanced without any essential proof."

Lastly, "The difference that reigns among the opinions of the learned, and their mutual opposition to one another, is the grand proof of their want of evidence." John Baptist.

Hence, Is it not, therefore, astonishing, to see the ignorance of puny mortals, in their believing contrary to God, and the whole powers we possess from him, that he will either command or require of us, that which is inconsistent with what we actually believe of him? But how can we expect it otherwise, considering such numbers thereof are taught under a pretence to enlighten the world; when in fact, they do actually keep them in darkness; the same as when a black sulphureous cloud spreads forth itself over the face of the sky, and intervenes betwixt the sun and the earth, thereby causeth darkness, and prevents its benign rays from falling on the surface of our globe, to refresh the vegetable creation. As in the above, so do the priests, namely those black clouds of superstition, in spreading forth themselves against the purity of the gospel,

taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles conformable thereto, prevent the knowledge of God from diffusing itself into the minds of the human race: for in whatever opinion or belief people are born and educated in, be it ever so gross, they will scarce, if ever, depart from it for the future: for not one of many hundreds thereof has either sense or resolution, to reject what we may call their parents or father's nonsense. Hence, I cannot conclude without observing as follows. (Mark this).

The greater degree of error and superstition, whereinto people are fallen or educated in, just all that more will they take it amiss, if it shall chance to be attacked or spoken against; especially, when ancient, and inseparable from their established belief. I shall, therefore, now wind up this dialogue, with that which was exprest by Jesus Christ to the superstitious Jews, *viz.* the Scribes and Pharisees, in their accusing his disciples for eating with unwashen hands; and thereby, according to the above gentlemen, transgressed the tradition of the elders. "And he thus answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the commandment of God," in disannulling the duty of children to parents, "by your tradition? Thus ye have made the commandment of God," or rather what we may call the gospel of Christ, "of none effect by your tradition." Therefore, "in vain do ye worship me; teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

P O S T S C R I P T.

JUD. **I** Much doubt if you meet with the esteem of priests.

GEN. If I were to meet with their esteem, *viz.* priests, while paid to be against me by them who love to have it so, it would be a bad account of having truth on my side: for to covet the esteem of such, would be to renounce being a friend to truth.

JUD. Your refusing Judaism or Jewish history, with different parts and books of the New Testament being of divine authority, contrary to what is required by priests, is what these gentlemen, if aided by an inquisition, would by no means dispense with.

GEN. That I verily believe: for what I reject depends altogether upon the authority of priests, independent of the moral attributes of God. For neither the epistle to the Hebrews, second Peter, the two last epistles of John, with that of Jude, and also the Revelation, besides others, were received as canonical, till after the fourth and fifth centuries; which appears evident from Eusebius, with others, who refuses of their being received in common as canonical; namely as being part of the New Testament in his time, who is said to have died in the four hundred and forty.

Now, since the Old, *viz.* Judaism, was rejected and set at naught by an unanimous vote

of the apostles or apostolic synod, and those not sustained as authentic or canonical for the space of four or five centuries or upwards, How dare these gentlemen, who are just as liable to err, and, in every respect, as fallible heads as our own, have the assurance, or rather what I may call the impudence, to require a belief therein of the laity, as being of divine authority; and that, too, under pain of being anathematized, if rejecting and not believing therein? But let every person be assured, when they hear damnation annexed to the not receiving that in which a belief is required by the priests, independent of the moral attributes of God, that it is entirely vague; and has nothing else to support it with, but the anathemas of these consecrated gentlemen for its authority.

Hence, Roman priests demand a belief in what they require (though ever so false) under pain of inquisition, in tormenting the body; and Protestant priests, having lost this power, demand a belief in what they require (though ever so absurd), under pain of eternal damnation, in tormenting the soul for ever, in what they call hell-fire.

From hence, it is, therefore, now evident, that each of these consecrated gentlemen, whether Popish or Protestant, act, in every respect, as far as the powers will admit by which they are limited.

Lastly, And to conclude this postscript, I apprehend, from what has been express in the foregoing, that no person will be so weak as

to imagine, that the apostles were damned on account of their abolishing and setting at naught Judaism—No: or, that the primitive christians were excluded heaven, and thereby sent to hell, on account of their rejecting Judaism, with such and such books, as vain and empty fables—No.

From hence, let no person be afraid of the anathemas of those imposing locusts, who despise truth, and, as it were, devour and eat up every green thing: for if the first christians were not excluded heaven on account of their rejecting such and such epistles, with that of Judaism, as observed in the above, no human soul, who walks conformable to the gospel taught by Jesus Christ, needs be afraid of missing heaven, and of being sent to hell, for rejecting such and such, as exprest therein, at this distant period.

JUD. But when such and such, as in the above, have been so long sustained as infallible, Why do you call them in question, when others are altogether satisfied therewith?

GEN. In answer to your objection, I shall, therefore, make the following remark. If I should be under a necessity to take a voyage to a far country, though I should see thousands going on board for said country of an old rotten or leaky vessel, without ever calling her frailty in question, Am I, if sensible of her insufficiency, because seeing others like fools, upon the bare advice of the master, going on board thereof, not to inspect the ship, but throw away my life with the rest as of no value? Is it

not my business first to inspect the stanchness of the vessel in which I intend to make my passage thither, before I embark therein for said voyage?

JUD. But though sensible of the rottenness or frailty of the ship yourself, Why do you publish it abroad to deter others from going on board and taking their passage therein?

GEN. If I should follow your advice, I should be, in every respect, as partial and bad as yourself. If I know and am certain of the insufficiency of said vessel, and do not acquaint those who are going on board thereof; if lost therein, I am therefore guilty of their death in not warning them of their danger: for, as we have but one life and one soul to lose, it is our express business to take care against throwing them away, if in our power to save them. However necessary it was to inspect the vessel in which we had but one life to lose, it is, in every respect, as necessary to inspect that of religion, in which we have but one soul to embark for eternity; which, if lost, can never possibly be regained.

JUD. With respect to Judaism, Why should we doubt and be afraid thereof, when even millions have embarked, and taken their passage therein with safety?

GEN. Yes; millions have, no doubt, embarked and taken their passage therein, who perhaps never arrived at the opposite shore.

JUD. I am sure we are taught otherwise by our teachers, *viz.* priests.

GEN. Yes; only by the owners, and such

who, for bread, were employed in fraughting of that old rotten and crazy vessel; but never one who took his passage therein ever wrote back, to certify his being arrived on the opposite shore.

JUD. Where, then, is Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, whom we are told are gone to heaven? and also those mentioned in the eleventh of the Hebrews?

GEN. If possessed but of as much knowledge as to conceal your own ignorance, you would certainly have known, that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, if gone to heaven at all, were there some centuries before Judaism took place: and as for those recorded in the eleventh of the Hebrews, it would be altogether superfluous to resume what has already been exprest thereon.

But further, nor is it to be wondered at, though you, like every other sect, rest your belief upon hearsay—No: for every sect and denomination, whether Mahometan, Christian, or Pagan, take their religion merely upon trust, the same as you. But he that implicitly believes in a religion, without examining into the particulars thereof, is of no religion at all. But to return,

Religions and sects may justly be compared to vessels, or masters thereof, wishing to take in passengers bound for a distant country: every master assures the people that his vessel is the best and safest ship in the harbour; and every priest, that his religion or sect is the best

and safest in the world to take men to heaven ; but it is every person's business to inspect the religion himself, in which he embarks his soul for heaven, as much as to inspect the ship on which he goes on board for a distant country : for if he leaves this momentuous affair to be directed therein by the skill of others, they will direct him only to those with whom they are concerned or have respect, though perhaps the worst of the whole.

JUD. Nothing can possibly be more just than what you have expressed ; yet, nevertheless, the whole of both Old and New Testaments is taken in, and sustained as infallible.

GEN. Yes; the Alcoran, and different books with Roman Catholics are taken in, and sustained as infallible, the same as they ; and if they who require a belief in either of the whole can give an incontestable evidence of the infallibility of those by whom they are taken in and sustained as such, I shall believe therein ; but not till then. But, to proceed,

Whether is it safest to believe in a religion, conformable to the moral attributes of God, with what is expressed by Jesus Christ ; or in that by which they are set at enmity, and thereby made to confound each other ? The latter may, indeed, be yours, but the former is mine : for he that requires a belief in any one, or part of the whole, as being divine (or having come from God), if not conformable to the above test, is a downright impostor.

But to conclude ; What will self-interest, ignorance, and superstition, not make divine ?

For they, in order that men may believe and receive as divine all that they require a belief in, threaten every one with a double portion of inevitable damnation, that rejects and will not comply therewith. But we are ten thousand times more liable to be damned, and sent to hell for ascribing God's authority for doctrines in which his moral attributes appear to contradict and thereby confound each other, than in refusing to believe therein; by which refusal, they are actually made to harmonize together. For if out of man's power to obey and do the will of God, and yet make him an accountable creature, and thereby bring him to judgment for his actions, is, in express words, to make God unjust; therefore no God at all. And, according to Dr. Whitecot, "That which has not reason in it, or for it, is man's superstition; and therefore not a religion of God's making."

DIALOGUE III.

Aaron's Calf, and Nature thereof, Considered.

JUDAIZER having been so long in the happy company, and under the influence of Gentile Christian, expresses himself thus.

I am now, said he, almost, if not altogether, induced to give place to that which I so greatly despised, *viz.* reason: and however strange

I formerly looked upon such as misbelieved many things which I confidently believed for truth, I therefore now think it, in every respect, more strange, by what means I could possibly admit of myself being imposed upon, in believing such gross falsehoods as I then adhered to for truth. - On which account, I am not surprised, though such priests as declaim against reason be so great enemies to that which distinguisheth us from the brutes that perish, considering the gross falsehoods they require of us to believe for sacred or divine truth.

And further, we have it recorded in the Jewish history, of the Israelites having required of Aaron to make them a god. Aaron, in compliance with their request, knowing of their being possessors of the spoils of Egypt (of which it is said they were licensed by his brother Moses to rob and carry along with them), orders them to break off their ear-rings, and other Jewels of gold, and give them to him, and he would make them a calf; which was immediately done. By which means, under a plausibility of serving them in their folly, Aaron received from them as in the above, and thereby tricked them out of all their dishonest and ill-gotten riches; which, upon the whole, was only one bite or deceiver tricking another; or rather, in other words, if we may use the phrase, the devil harling the lang-kail out of his mother's teeth. The calf being, therefore, now agreed on, made, and finished by Aaron, the people began to worship it; upon which it is said that Moses, in his drawing

nigh thereunto, was offended; and in his anger took the calf which Aaron had made, and burnt it in the fire; and grinded it to powder; and strewed it upon the waters; and there made the people drink of it. Thus Moses, in his burning the calf, proves it to have been only a mere combustible figure, only gilt or plated, and not of solid gold.

GEN. Yes, so it appears: for gold is what he could never possibly have burnt to ashes, as exprest by the historian—No.

JUD. But Moses may have reduced it to powder, by virtue of a process of chymical preparations.

GEN. No: for it is said expressly, that he burnt it in the fire; therefore, your argument must certainly go for naught: for the burning of which is a demonstrable proof, of its having been only made either of wood or of some other combustible substance; and then, when finished, gilt, or over-laid with gold, as exprest in the above.

JUD. I must acknowledge what you observe is of great probability; yet, I apprehend, the art of gilding was perhaps not then discovered, or in use at that day: without which art, he could not possibly have gilt the calf, or made it pass for gold.

GEN. Of gilding being not only discovered, but even practised in the days of Moses and Aaron, is evident from the Mosaic system; in which we are told that both the ark (I mean their wooden God, and things therein, on which they laid so much stress in conquering

and defending them from their enemies), and the table for the shew-bread, with their staffs, and also the boards and bars of the tabernacle, were all made of shittim-wood, and gilt, or laid over with gold. But, to return to the subject of Moses burning the calf.

As to the reduction or burning of gold unto ashes by fire, in order to prove the absurdity thereof, an ounce weight of that metal has been kept, even for two months together, in a glass-house furnace (which of all others is said to be of the most vehement, and most intense heat), without so much as suffering the least diminution either in its weight or quality. And it is likewise observed, even by the chymists, that though gold should undergo a process or trial, as in the above, for the space of twenty years together, it could meet with no loss or diminution, as observed in the foregoing.

Hence, and it is further to be remarked, that Aaron, the calf-maker, or what they call the saint of God, though guilty as in the above, we never read of his repentance on account thereof; and yet, after all, which is most surprising, is canonized for a saint by that people, as express in the metre of the hundred and sixth Psalm, and 16th verse.

At Aaron they, the saint of God,
Envious also were.

Lastly, (Mark this) Though Moses burnt, or rather may be said to have roasted the calf for the good of the people, Aaron his brother

had, no doubt, the whole fat, *viz.* the substance and droppings thereof; on which he, while in life, his sons and their successors, have fared sumptuously unto this day. But whether Moses was concerned therein as to partake of the profits that accrued therefrom, I shall not determine; but this we know, they, namely Moses and Aaron, divided the government of the state betwixt them: the one the civil, and the other the ecclesiastic; *viz.* the rule and benefit thereof, was settled on Aaron, his sons and posterity for ever; which, of all others, was certainly the most lucrative birth among that people.

JUD. Whatever truth you may have on your side, one thing I know, your sentiments are very unpopular.

GEN. That I verily believe: for nothing is more unpopular than truth; nor can my sentiments, though condemned by the world for detecting the corruptions ingrafted on the gospel, be more unpopular than the purity thereof, when delivered by Jesus Christ, was to the Jews: for if any man acknowledged Christ's sentiments among that people, he was thereupon to be expelled the synagogue. But this severity, though not intended by that people, turned out, to the contrary of what they intended, to the furtherance of the gospel.

Hence, similar thereto do you, Judaizers, act against such as are embarked in the diffusing of truth through the world. And not only this, but a noted Jesuit, for fear of his Jesuitical principles being detected, was ac-

tive both in a public and private manner, in discharging people against keeping company with such persons (as objected to his own Jesuitical tenets), in order that he might thereby prevent the diffusing of truth, as in the above. But what he thus intended against keeping company with such, was what gave both time and opportunity to the propagating and furtherance of what he prohibited; and like unto the devil, and superstitious Jews, betrayed his cause, and thereby destroyed himself: for without both time and opportunity, the knowledge of the gospel, independent of Judaism, could never possibly have been diffused abroad, as it now certainly is.

JUD. I much doubt but the priests, on reading over these volumes, will be astonished of their ignorance in not having understood the gospel system independent of Judaism.

GEN. Those who delight in truth, no doubt, will; but such as are sunk in error, superstition, and enthusiasm, will even tremble, cry out, and be afraid, upon the most distant hearing thereof.

Lastly, And to conclude. The foregoing gentlemen, *viz.* Mr. Jesuit, Mr. Judaizer, Mr. Jansenist, the Friar or Augustin Monk, Mr. Antinomian, and Mr. Trinitarian, with all their different sectaries and sectarians, finding themselves not only nonplussed, but even vanquished by Gentile Christian and Unitarian; and being no longer able to resist and withstand, or hold out in support of their sophistical arguments, used against these two

antagonists, *viz.* Gentile Christian and Unitarian:—they, *viz.* the above gentlemen, in maintaining their cause in favours of their delusive doctrines, by which they have so long deceived the world, and now finding every other evasion at an end, Come, say they (like the Jews with Jeremiah), let us smite him with the tongue, and thereby accuse and indict him for heresy; and then apply to the civil law to support our cause. But, in answer to the above gentlemen, it certainly bears the aspect of a very bad cause, that will not support itself: for truth is never afraid of error; but error trembles at the most distant hearing of truth. But God forbid that ever I should be concerned in doctrines of which I am afraid of their being either attacked, called in question, or enquired into, and will not support themselves. But one thing, I acknowledge, the gospel of Christ, no doubt, must of necessity suffer, and remain in exile, so long as fines and imprisonments are exacted on the discoverers of truth.

Hence, but one thing I would, therefore, ask, Why does a law take part with that which it cannot support from truth? Further, but of one thing we may be fully assured, which is; if the civil law was not a greater friend to justice than the ecclesiastic, especially the Sec-tarians, and such as take part therewith, truth might take farewell, and bid adieu to this realm; but thanks be to heaven, and him that dwelleth therein, the above is not the case. But of

this we may be pretty much assured, that the christian religion will never recover its liberty, while they admit of its being blended with Judaism, and governed by such as adhere thereto—No, it never possibly will. But no person needs be discouraged, though arraigned as in the above—No: for if accused of heresy and maltreated on account thereof, it will be an incontestable evidence of your having truth on your side: for no person was ever yet persecuted for writing or publishing of error, *viz.* falsehood, if it has not been for treason or against the state.

P O S T S C R I P T.

WITH respect to Judaism, I shall just barely remark some of the express contradictions (observed elsewhere) of Judaism and Jewish history; which are as follows.

Deut. xxiv. 16. "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children; neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin." 2 Kings xiv. 6. 2 Chron. xxv. 4. Jer. xxxi. 29, 30. with that of Ezek. xviii. 20. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Now, since that the father was neither to suffer nor be put to death for the son, nor the son for the father, the innocent for the guilty, but that every person was to die for his own sin, How come the children of the old world, the children of Sodom, with that which is expressed in the second commandment, "I will visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;" also the children of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, their wives, their servants, and cattle; and likewise Achan, his sons, his daughters, his servants, his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent; and also, the seven nations of Canaan, *viz.* the Canaanites, not only the parents, but even the innocent children, infants and sucklings? And likewise, Saul was ordered, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3. by the command of Samuel personating God, to destroy the Amalekites, men and women, infants and sucklings, oxen and sheep, camel and ass, for a supposed injury or fault, committed by their ancient ancestors, about five hundred years before that period. And also the Israelites, by the direction of Urim and Thummim, what they called the command of God (*viz.* their oracle, in which they trusted, but were deceived), cut off the Benjamites, infant and suckling: for we are told none thereof were left but six hundred men, who fled to the rock Rimmon. And also, in virtue of which oracle, their smiting to death the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gi-

lead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children, *viz.* infant and suckling, for not assisting in the destruction of the Benjamites.

To these we may add the three years famine, for the crime of Saul having slain the Gibeonites, with that of God having smote Israel, *viz.* seventy thousand of whom are said to have been destroyed and slain for David's fault, *viz.* his having caused to number Israel, or these innocent sheep as he calls them. And likewise, the blessing those who dashed out the brains of the tender and little infants of the Babylonians; the innocent upon account of the guilty, contrary to that which is expressed in the foregoing, whereby God is made appear to contradict and thereby confound himself.

Hence, but is either of these like what is exprest of the supreme God; with whom it is said there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning? No; but to this it is replied, Who can say unto him, what doest thou? But, in answer to this reply, there is nothing can possibly be so repugnant in the nature of things, yea, though it were to canonize and worship the devil, but what the priests, if in support of the priesthood, can make pass for sacred and divine truth; especially if in favours of what they profess. In short it is, in every respect, just as possible to reconcile not only fire and water, but every other contradiction under heaven with each other, as to reconcile the above texts, such as to make them harmonize

together. But, in a word, What will sophistry and bare assertion not make divine?

Lastly, I could give many more instances of like nature, with those observed in the foregoing, but I am afraid some will even think these few texts too many; though, mean time, I have said nothing but what the learned and judicious Archbishop Tillotson does actually make evident, in his affirming, "The difference betwixt the style of the Old and New Testament being so very remarkable, that one of the greatest sects in the primitive times did, upon this very ground, found their heresy, *viz.* a belief in two distinct Gods. The one evil, fierce, and cruel, whom they called the God of the Old Testament; the other good, kind, and merciful, whom they called the God of the New Testament. The difference is actually so great between the representations made of God in the books of the Jewish and Christian religion, as to give at least some," if not the utmost, "colour and pretence for an imagination of two distinct Gods."

From hence, it is, therefore, no great wonder, though priests, who thirst for dominion over the consciences of men, refuse people the liberty to enquire with freedom into what they require of them to believe, in considering how repugnant so many of these things are in which they require a positive belief, under pain of inevitable damnation; though even opposite to religious and divine truth. For, as reported of Adam, in what he is said to have expressed to God concerning Eve, "The woman,"

says he, "whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree and I did eat." Similar thereto may people, with as just propriety, say, in reference to their priests in whom they believe and rely on as their spiritual guides, The priest thou gave unto us, deceived us; and we, by trusting thereto, have actually been deceived—But alas! it is now too late, after having despised every admonition to convince us of the evil and certainty thereof, when none can assist to our relief.

From hence, we may now learn the fatal consequence of a blind credulity, which has crept into the world, and possesses the minds of the more ignorant, who believe in every bold pretender to revelation; and are thereby induced to believe whatever they impose on them in the name of divine truth. But, as observed by the great Tillotson, "God and nature have prescribed an excellent remedy, *viz.* reason, by which we may examine the grounds and testimonies of all pretended revelations; and having thus scrupulously enquired into the truth thereof, pass sentence on them, according as the evidences shall turn out. This rule assures us that God cannot possibly command any thing foolish, ridiculous, or unlike himself."

THE
GOSPEL RECOVERED
FROM ITS
CAPTIVE STATE.

B O O K XI.

Dissertations on various Subjects.

DISSERTATION I.

Of the Nature of the Mahometan and Popish Religions.

HENCE, of all the religions under the sun, I know none equal, or better calculated for the credulous, the ignorant, and unthinking croud, the enthusiast and superstitious devotee, than the Mahometan, and that of Popery: for the whole services of the above, like the Jewish religion, consist in a mere superstitious devotion, and round of ceremonies, altogether calculated for such as delight therein. For the better understanding of which, I shall therefore quote as follows.

“ Their religion, whereof Mahomet was

author, comprehends six general precepts, circumcision, prayer, fasting, alms, pilgrimage, and abstinence from wine. Circumcision is the chiefest of their ceremonies, which, they say, has the same effect with baptism; and add, that it is impossible to be saved without it; wherefore they celebrate it with great solemnity, and keep feasts as the christians do at their marriages. Their prayers are short but frequent; for they go to them five times a-day; Mahomet calls them the pillars of religion and the keys of paradise; they consist most in prostrations and gestures; and when they come to them they turn to the east, but more often to the south towards their prophets tomb, and pray with such application, that they would not interrupt them did the Sultan command it, or were their houses on fire. Friday is their solemnest day of the week (on which some of whom are very pointed in the observance thereof), which they distinguish by being a longer time at prayers, on that than other days.

Sueton, Lucian, and Gellius give an account, that the Grecians and Asiatics observed a seventh day. Sueton says that Diogenes Laertius used to dispute at Rhodes on Saturday, or Jewish Sabbath; and, according to Lucian, that the school-boys had a day of relaxation every seventh day. And also, Gellius, that there used to be public orations at the assemblies of young men held in Athens, every seventh Monday; which were consecrated to Apollo; and also, that on a certain festival,

Vulcatius Gallianus says, The soldiers used to exercise on that day. Lampridius says of Severus, that he used to go into the capitol, and frequent the temples on that day. Clem. Alexandrin and Josephus assert, that the Greeks observed the seventh day; and yet the Heathens did unanimously despise the Jewish Sabbaths in their writings. But, to return to our subject,

The Turks never enter their temples or mosques until they purify themselves by washing their bodies; they observe an extraordinary fast in their ninth month called Ramadan; this begins with the new moon, wherefore they get on the top of their houses, the sooner to discover this planet, and acquaint the people therewith; and then they neither eat nor drink but at nights, live very reserved, and leave off taking tobacco; any Turk that neglects or breaks this fast, is certainly put to death. When it happens in summer (for their lunar year, consisting of twelve lunaisons, has no fixed beginning; so that the Ramadan falls successively in all seasons), labourers ready to drop down for thirst, dare not taste a drop of water to refresh themselves with. They frequent the mosques night and day, shun conversations and pastime or diversion, and have a horror for blasphemies. They hold, that during this month God opens the gates of heaven, and shuts those of hell. They have clergy called dervises, who live a very retired and austere life, observing always a profound silence and humility; go bare-foot, with a lea-

ther girdle round their body full of sharp points to mortify the flesh, and sometimes beat and burn themselves with hot irons.

Further, they commonly believe predestination, and that both good and bad happen by the particular command of God; and if one asks why God hath created the infidels and wicked, their answer is much the same with those of the systematical doctors, who patronize doctrines inconsistent with the moral attributes of God; who, in order, lest they should be found false, but rather that they may be sustained as infallible, prohibit their votaries from enquiring thereinto, saying, that we ought not to be over-curious to search into the secrets of God. Touching the faithful who die before they repent of their sins, they believe they are in suspense after their death, and that God disposes of them after his own pleasure; forgiving some and condemning others.

Hence, the morals of the Mahometans consist in doing good and shunning evil; their casuists hold that the actions done without faith in God are sins; and that whosoever renounceth it, loseth the merit of all his good works; and that, during all that time, he can do nothing acceptable to God, till he hath repented; then he becomes Mussulman or faithful again. But he must marry a second time, if he was married before; and if he hath been once at Mecca, he must return thither again. They forbid to judge of uncertain things; as for instance, nobody must say, such a one is

dead, or shall die in the faith; because it doth not belong to us to judge of the things that God hath concealed from us. The devotion of the Mahometans extends to the very sacred names. When they pronounce the name of God, they make a bow, and they add, Most High, most blessed, most strong, most excellent, or some such thing. They have devout men amongst them, that do more than the law commands them; and who go to nine o'clock prayers in the morning, though there be no obligation to do it. There be some conditions which, being not observed in their prayers, make them useless. For instance, in their prayers at noon and afternoon, which are obligatory amongst them, they must read low; but in their evening prayers, before they go to bed, and in the morning prayers, they must read with a loud voice if there be an Iman that is a priest; but if they pray alone, then it is indifferent. Besides, in saying their prayers, the men ought first of all to lift up their hands to the tip of their ears, and the women to the jaws only. When they stand and have their right hand upon their left, if it be a man he ought to place his hands under his navel; but if it be a woman, she ought to put them upon her breast. In fine, that they may pray orderly, they ought with a low voice to follow the Iman, and imitate him in whatsoever he doth. If they chance to speak or laugh in their prayers, so that they may be heard, their prayers are void. They are forbidden to pray to God with the garment they commonly use

at their work up and down the house, and which they would not wear were they to pay a visit to a person of quality. They ought not to pray neither before the fire; but they may use a candle or a lamp. It is of divine obligation amongst them to wash their mouth, their face, and the whole body. If they break wind during the abdest or ablution, then the ablution is void. They count amongst the commands of God to wash their face once, and their arms to the elbow, to wash the fourth part of the head and their feet once. The tradition of Mahomet commands them to wash their hands three times, to cleanse their teeth with a certain sort of wood, and then to wash their mouth three times, and the nose as often, without any intermission; when they have once begun, then to wet their ears with the same water they washed their head withall. They must always wash the right hand first; and whenever they wash their hands and feet they are obliged to begin at their fingers."

And as to the useless jargon and ceremonies contained in the Popish or Roman Catholic religion, time would even almost fail me to enumerate or repeat; and are as follows. *Viz.* of Fastings; of diverse washings; of mysteries; of miracles; of celibacy, namely, the forbidding of priests to marry; of dreeing of penance; of confessions and absolutions; of indulgences; of sprinkling with holy water; of the anointing with oil; of extreme unction; of crosses and crossings; of the host; of the forbidding of different kinds of meats, *viz.* the

abstinence therefrom; of praying to the Virgin Mary; of praying to saints; of praying to angels; of praying for the dead; of praying them out of purgatory; of monasteries; of cloisters; of convents; of nunneries; of nuns and what not. These few are only a small specimen of the many others too tedious to mention.

Hence, no people are more sincere and devout than those of Mahometans and Roman Catholics. In short, the laity (not to speak of our own) are only mere slaves or beasts of burden to the clergy, who are excessive numerous among the Catholics; by whom the Popish countries are almost, if not altogether, eaten up.

Further, they, of all others, are most zealous, sincere, fervent, and devout, in their different services. For instance, a Roman Catholic priest, though only preaching upon a holy or saints-day, will, through his great heat and fervency of spirit, in crying up the saint of whom he speaks, set the people a tearing who attend thereon. And it is too often the case that the greater degree of ceremony and superstition religion is leavened with, all that more sincere, fervent, and devout, will they appear in the performance thereof. From this it is evident, that sincerity (though inseparable from the true religion) is no infallible mark of a religion (or an opinion) being from God, or of divine authority—No; or if it be, both Mahometan and Roman Catholicism, how-

ever gross or absurd, must therefore be divine also.

From hence it follows, that if strip the gross of mankind of superstition, they would actually believe they could neither approach or be acceptable, either in worship or any other service they owe as due in the sight of God.

Further, I cannot properly conclude without the following remark. If strip the bulk of mankind, whether Mahometan, Roman Catholic, Jews, or even Protestants, of their superstition, in which they believe, worship, and serve God, they would have their religion to seek, and perhaps not know where to find it.

Lastly, and it is only by giving too much credit to Judaism, and falsehoods therein contained, that hath corrupted and undone the whole.

Hence, and to conclude, How many millions of both Roman Catholics and protestants in Christendom, who sincerely believe they are serving God, when, in reality, they are nothing more than only mere dupes or slaves to priests and priest-craft? And I much doubt, if such, as observed in the above, were stript of their superstition, their enthusiasm, and mysterious traditions, with other corrupt doctrines ingrafted on the gospel of Christ, they would have their religion to seek, and not know where to find it: for ceremony and sincerity are inseparable from a corrupt religion; and by these two are many (especially the ignorant or credulous part of mankind) seduced

thereto. An instance of which may be seen in the metropolis of our nation, where Popish missionaries oft-times resort; and there prevail by the above means on weak and feeble minds when in distress. They, through a mistaken belief of priests having a power with God to prevail with him in their behalf, rely thereon as infallible guides to intercede for them: and, if recovered to health, many of which, through the sincerity and intercession of these consecrated gentlemen, become Roman Catholics.

DISSERTATION II.

Of Christ being led up of the Spirit into the Wilderness to be tempted of the Devil.

THE subject on which I am now to treat is, of Christ (Matth. iv. 1.) being led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, and there to be tempted of the devil. A subject, indeed, if duly considered, and properly understood and attended unto, is, no doubt, what not only requires, but deserves the most particular attention.

Hence, as to the understanding and explaining of this fourth chapter of Matthew's gospel in a literal sense, the objections are obvious, which certainly ly against it, as stated in the literal expression. But, for the better understanding and explaining of which, I shall

quote the exprefs sentiments of a most ingenious and judicious writer, who has considered that subject fully; and has given such reasons as appear convincing to every unprejudiced reader; as proves that the whole of this transaction was only a vision or what they call a prophetic dream. His arguments, for what he has advanced in confirmation of the above, are as follows.

“The account given of the devil taking Jesus up into the holy city, and setting him on a pinnacle of the temple, and afterwards taking him up into an exceeding high mountain, if we take it to have been literally done, whether we understand it of Jesus being transported by Satan through the air, or only led by him from place to place, has something exceeding strange and shocking in it, and of which we have nothing of like related in the scriptures. And a little consideration will convince us, that it was an impossibility in nature for the devil really to shew Jesus from any mountain or height whatsoever, in a moment of time, all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; that is, all the wealth and treasures of them, and whatever constitutes the splendor and magnificence of sovereigns; royal robes, and crowns, and thrones, and palaces, and courts, and guards, and armies. This (if possible to any power whatsoever, which it seems not to be,) must be considered as by far too extravagant, and even the greatest miracle recorded in all the scriptures. And the allowing such a miraculous power to

the devil, destroys the credit and use of miracles, and contradicts numerous declarations of the scriptures; which represent them as decisive and absolute demonstrations of the divinity and sole dominion of Jehovah, and as an immediate divine testimony to his messengers. If, then, we are obliged, from the nature of the thing, to conclude that this temptation could be no other than a mere visionary one, is there not reason to conclude the others were so; as this is no less related as a matter of fact than the others are? Although to understand it as a matter of fact, in a literal sense, implies a manifest and palpable contradiction in the nature of things; so that, had even omnipotence itself been the agent instead of the devil, there would have been occasion for not understanding it in a literal sense; because whatever miracles are related in the scriptures, though they are beyond the powers of nature, yet imply not contradictions in themselves, as this does of shewing Jesus, in a natural way, from a mountain, however exceeding high, all the kingdoms in the world, and the glory of them: for the sun itself, at its immense height above the highest mountain, commands only one half or hemisphere of this earth. How absurd, therefore, is it to think that the devil could, in reality, shew Jesus, from a mountain, all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them?

Further, the evangelist Luke says, that the devil shewed unto Jesus all the kingdoms of

the world in a moment of time; which expression sufficiently intimates, that the evangelist is not speaking of the real sight of all these objects: for was there any mountain which commanded so extensive a prospect, Jesus must have changed his position, and gradually have turned himself round, in order to take a distinct view of the several parts of it; or had all the parts, in a miraculous manner, been placed before his bodily sight, he must have surveyed them in succession one after another. The evangelist must certainly design to be understood of what was instantaneously exhibited to his mind. That what is described by the evangelist could not be done in reality, we shall be the more convinced of, the more we consider it. What shall we conclude then? That the devil represented these things in a vision to Jesus? No: this is to allow the devil a sovereign influence over the mind. And reason, if we attend to it, will tell us, that the gracious parent and guardian of mankind, will never commit to the devil such a dangerous power over them as this. And mankind (blessed be God) have never yet experienced that the devil does in fact exercise such a power over them. And divine revelation, as it ascribes all miraculous operations in general, so visions, in particular, to God as their author. It deserves, therefore, to be attentively considered, whether the expressions the evangelists have made use of in the account they have given of Jesus being tempted, compared with our scriptures, will not allow us to

conclude, that all these scenes were represented to Jesus in a prophetic vision, of which the Spirit of God was the immediate and sole author.—St. Matthew's words are, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit" *viz.* the holy Spirit, "into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil"—St. Mark's words are, "Immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness"—St. Luke's are, "And Jesus, being full of the Holy Spirit, returned from Jordan; and was led up by the Spirit" *viz.* the Holy Spirit just mentioned "into the wilderness."

Now, it is to be considered, that Jesus was turning to Galilee through the wilderness, at the same time he is said to be led up of the Spirit into it, or driven into it by the Spirit. And therefore it seems improper to understand this of his being carried or led there in a corporeal manner; in which sense, he was there before. But parallel expressions in scripture will shew that we may properly understand it of his having the wilderness represented to his imagination in a vision, although he was there corporally before. It is proper to take notice, that the Greek word which is rendered led, though it has that signification, yet also signifies lifted up. Now, we find that the prophet Ezekiel thus expresses himself, Chap. xi. "Moreover the Spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the Lord's house, which looketh eastward; and, behold, at the door of the gate five and twenty men: among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and

Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Then said he unto me, Son of man, these are the men that devise mischief, and give wicked counsel in this city; therefore, prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man. And it came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died." After mentioning this, which is expressed as a matter of fact really happening, and several other things, he concludes, "Afterwards the Spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity: so the vision that I had seen went up from me. Then I spake unto them of the captivity, all the things that the Lord had shewed me." Here it is to be observed, that the prophet mentions what had only passed in vision, as if it had been really done in fact. He does not say, In my vision it seemed to me I prophesied, and thereupon methought Pelatiah fell dead; but he expresses it as a real matter of fact, "It came to pass, when I prophesied, that Pelatiah the son of Benaiah died." And he says, "The Spirit took him up, and brought him into Chaldea to them of the captivity;" though he was in fact all the while there corporally, and had never moved from it. The meaning, therefore, can be no other, than that after it had been represented to him in his vision, as if he was transported to Jerusalem, it was represented to him as if he was brought back again into Chaldea: and then he awoke from his vision. It appears then plainly from this, that according to the language then used

in relating prophetic visions, the evangelists might say of Jesus, that he "was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness," although he was corporally there (if so be, in a vision or dream, he had a representation made to him of his being in the wilderness); and might express the other particulars as real matters of fact, although they passed only in vision. Upon another occasion, Ezekiel expresses himself thus, "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in" or by "the Spirit of the Lord, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones," although what follows is plainly nothing more than a narrative of a vision. In Rev. xvii. 3. John says, "He carried me away in the Spirit to a great high mountain." In both of which places, every one must discern that John can be only speaking of a spiritual rapture or vision.

From these expressions in the scriptures, and several others which might be brought, we may reasonably conclude, that when the evangelist says that "Jesus was led (or carried) up of the Spirit into the wilderness;" or, as St. Mark expresses it, "The Spirit," or as it is in some manuscripts, "The Holy Spirit driveth him (or casteth him out) into the wilderness," they mean no more than that Jesus was cast into an ecstasy or trance by the Spirit of God; during which, he seemed to himself to be carried into the wilderness. In which sense a person may be said to be carried to the very place where he was before personally and corporally; because it appears so to him in his dream.

or vision. But in a literal sense, a person cannot properly be said to be carried or led to a place where he is already. This, then, appearing to be the sense of Jesus being led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, it is natural to conclude that this subsequent translation, or rather transition, from the wilderness to the summit of the Jewish temple, and from thence to a distant mountain, was also not real and corporeal, but spiritual and mental only; especially as it appears from the history, that Jesus was in the wilderness when the temptation ended, as well as when it began, pursuing his journey into Galilee. And St. Mark has assured us in express terms, that the wilderness was the place where he sustained his temptations; "He was there in the wilderness forty days tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts:" language which ill agrees with the supposition, that the principal temptations were proposed to him when he was out of the wilderness.

As there is reason, from parallel expressions in scripture, to conclude that Jesus was not transported from place to place, but that it only seemed so to him by the impressions made on his imagination in the vision; so there is the same reason to conclude, that Jesus was only tempted in his vision; and that the devil had nothing in reality to do in it, any further than that the image of him was placed before the imagination of Jesus, and he seemed to him to say and do all that is ascribed to him in the history: which was, in effect, the same thing with regard to Jesus, as if the devil had

appeared and tempted him in person, and translated him from place to place by his proper agency. It is for this reason that the history expresseth it, that the devil did all these things. Whoever will read Ezekiel's account of his being transported in imagination from place to place, and acting several things, during his being under a prophetic vision, will find they are related as real matters of fact, as much as the temptations of Jesus are: though it plainly appears that they were only visionary representations. So we are told in the twenty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, that the Lord said unto him, "Take the wine cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. Then took I," saith the prophet, "the cup at the Lord's hand, and made all the nations to drink unto whom the Lord had sent me; *viz.* Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, and the kings thereof; Pharaoh king of Egypt, and his servants, and his princes, and all his people; and all the kings of the land of Uz; and all the kings of the land of the Philistines; and all the kings of Arabia, and of Edom, and of the Medes." Now the prophet relates his doing of this just as if he had in reality done it; and yet it cannot be conceived that the prophet did it in reality, but only, that in his vision his imagination was impressed with the idea of his doing it. Thus in chapter xiii. the prophet tells us, that "The word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Take the girdle that thou hast got upon thy loins, and arise, go to Euphrates, and hide it

there in the hole of a rock. So I went and hid it by Euphrates, as the Lord commanded me. And it came to pass after many days, that the Lord said unto me, Arise, go to Euphrates, and take the girdle from thence which I commanded thee to hide there. Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it; and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing." But can we, with any ground of reason, suppose that God really sent the prophet twice a journey of so many hundred miles for so trifling a purpose? Must we not conclude, that this was only transacted by the prophet in imagination, during his prophetic vision? Especially, as the lively representation of these things in vision, conveyed the same instruction, and answered every purpose, as well as the real performance of them could have done. Nor need we wonder to find the circumstances of visions related as facts, inasmuch as they pass for such in the mind of the person who has the vision; and he is affected by them in the same manner as he would be by the real things. In the account of the Lord's coming unto Abram in a vision, Gen. xv. we are told, that "The Lord brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars." But it appears from the following verses that this was about the middle of the day when the stars do not appear; and therefore, the Lord did not really bring forth Abram abroad, and shew him the stars; but only an impression of this being done was made upon

his imagination, during his vision. It appears then beyond doubt, from these and other instances which might be produced, that it is usual in the scriptures to relate visions or representations made to the mind of the prophet, as if they were real transactions. Now, Does it hereby become difficult to distinguish fiction from fact, while the nature and scope of the relation sufficiently ascertains what it is? If the occurrence be possible and probable, so as to admit, and the manifest intention and other circumstances of it require a literal construction, it would be very absurd to have recourse to any other. Whereas, on the other hand, if neither the nature of the things themselves which are related, do admit, nor the design of them require, a real performance; it would be equally unreasonable not to look out for some figurative interpretation. If we proceed by these rules in forming our judgment concerning Jesus' temptations, we must conclude that they are not to be understood as real facts; or outward transactions; in so much as the things themselves are improbable and even impracticable in their own nature; and in so much as the real performance could answer no valuable purpose.

It remains now to be considered whether we have any room from any thing parallel in the scriptures to conclude, that God might probably present these scenes before the mind of Jesus: and what purpose worthy the wisdom of God could be thereby answered. No.

thing is more certain, than that God does not tempt any man, in the criminal sense of that expression; he never acts with an intention of seducing men into sin; nay, he does every thing consistent with the rules of his moral government, to guard them against it. Nevertheless, there is a sense of the word, in which God does tempt men; that is, he proposeth to them suitable trials, for the display and improvement of their piety and obedience. Thus God tempted, or made trial of Abraham. And thus he tempteth or trieth all men; having endued them with those affections, and placed them in those circumstances, which necessarily constitute a trial of their integrity. Nor are these trials unworthy of God; but are indeed the very means he useth to exercise, confirm, and perfect our virtue. And trials might be proposed to Jesus Christ, with the same general intention, as they are to the children of men. For "Though a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

We have in the scriptures of the Old Testament two remarkable instances of God's tempting, that is, giving trials to his servants for a display of their piety and obedience, in dreams or visions. The first thereof is Abraham, which is related in Gen. xv. In this dream or vision, we find, that it was represented to Abraham's mind, as if God took him forth abroad, and bid him look towards heaven, and see how numerous the stars were, adding, "So shall thy seed be;" and that Abraham, upon this

representation being made on his imagination, concluding in his mind that it would be so, because God had said it, notwithstanding the natural impediments which lay in the way; "It was counted to him," as reported in that history, "for righteousness" by God, just the same as if he had done so out of a vision. The second instance is in 1 Kings iii. where it is related, that it was represented by God to Solomon in a dream by night, that he said unto him, "Ask what I shall give thee," and that Solomon chusing in his dream "an understanding heart, to discern between good and bad, the speech," as reported, "pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing:" for though some think that what is said in the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th verses, was said by Solomon awaked from his dream; yet its being said in the 15th verse, "And Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream," seems strongly to imply, that all that is mentioned from the 5th to the 15th verse was during the dream. These two instances sufficiently prove, that God doth not deem it unfit sometimes to make trial of his servants by visions or dreams. The mind seems to be as capable of using its power of reasoning, deliberating, chusing, or refusing, with respect to the representation of a vision or dream, as with respect to the objects of sense. And consequently, the one may serve for the trial and display of virtue no less than the other. From the account we have in scripture, we find the prophets and others arguing and acting, during a vision or

dream, with as much freedom, force, and probity, as they could have done at any other time, and just in the same manner they would have done, if real and external objects had been presented to their senses. When the apostle Peter had a visionary representation of a large sheet, let down, as it were, from heaven, full of abundance of animals, clean and unclean, and was bid to take his choice, and satisfy his hunger, he startles at the proposal, and remonstrates just as he would have done, had it been a real scene, not a visionary one. "Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten any thing common or unclean." If this was the case with others, during their visions, it is reasonable to suppose it was the same with Jesus, during his vision; and consequently, he might discover as much virtue in rejecting proposals made to him in a vision, as in vanquishing outward temptations. But this vision, however, might answer the end of a trial, was also probably designed by God as a prediction and symbolical representation of the particular difficulties and temptations Jesus was to meet with in the execution of his office, and in the exercise of his miraculous power as the Messiah; for if we examine the other visions recorded in scripture, we shall find that for the most part they were a prediction and prefiguration of things to come.

The first scene of Jesus' temptation, in which he was tempted to turn stones into bread, to satisfy his hunger, might, as a symbolical prediction or representation, be intended to shew,

that he was to struggle with all the hardships of poverty, and the other evils of humanity; but never, not even on the most pressing occasions, to exert his miraculous power for his own personal relief. The divine powers with which Jesus was invested, were designed as the seal of his mission; and accordingly they were never applied to a different purpose. This strict appropriation of his miracles to their proper intention, served to point it out more clearly, and to keep it in constant view; to manifest the wisdom and necessity of the works themselves, and to preserve dignity and authority; which would have been impaired, if not destroyed, by a more general application of them. As Jesus never applied them to any purpose foreign to their grand intention, so it was in a very peculiar manner necessary that he should never be employed to protect himself from the calamities and distresses to which human nature is incident. Had he, when made in the likeness of men, saved himself by miracles from the evils of humanity, Where had been his conflict, his victory, his triumph? or, Where the consolations and benefit his followers derive from his example, his merit, his crown? sufferings were the theatre on which he displayed his divine virtues; and they were both the ground of his advancement to the glorious office of our Redeemer, and a natural means of inspiring him with compassion to all who were to follow him.

Jesus' second temptation to cast himself down from a wing of the temple at Jerusalem,

might, as a symbolical representation, be intended to point out to him that he was to avoid an ostentatious display of his divine power, and not to make any demands upon God, to testify that he was the Messiah, but to remain satisfied with the evidence he was pleased to give of it. Agreeable to this, we find Jesus always refused to ask for further signs from God of his being the Messiah, than what he had been pleased of himself to testify it by: though he was frequently told that those signs were not sufficient to prove him to be the Messiah.

The third temptation represented to Jesus, might, as a symbolical representation, signify to him, that his kingdom was not of this world; and that he was never to serve the prince of this world, by coming into any worldly schemes, or aspiring at human greatness, however much he might be solicited to it, or whatever offers were made of advancing him to greatness. In the course of his ministry, we find that Jesus had actually this temptation to struggle with; for the people in general were eager, and even violent, to make him a king: for St. John relates, that they would have taken him by force to make him a king, had he not employed his accustomed prudence to prevent it: and, no doubt, his disciples, and constant followers, were frequently exciting him to it, as far as they dared to do. If any thing can heighten worldly greatness, when it comes in competition with our duty, it is the being practised in circumstances of indigence;

such as are infinitely beneath that rank to which our merit entitles us. And therefore to refuse, as Christ did, the offers of grandeur and royalty, and universal empire, while he was struggling with poverty, reproach, and persecution, in the cause of God, was the highest act of virtue that humanity could exhibit.

That instruction might possibly be given to Jesus by these visions, appears plain from the vision that the apostle Peter had before Cornelius the Gentile sent for him: for it appears from Acts, Chap. xi. that Peter inferred from that vision, that he might go into men uncircumcised, and eat with them."

Further, and as to the reality of Christ's temptations, the circumstances thereof being so contrary to reason and common sense, the evangelists appear rather to have taken it from report, *viz.* on hearsay, or at second hand, than from being informed thereof by Jesus himself: for in all his discourses there is not so much as one syllable relating to any such circumstances; for the account of Christ having been tempted of the devil, and of his having fasted forty days in the wilderness (in allusion to the fabulous account of Moses having been forty days on the mount, and of Elijah having lived forty days and forty nights upon the strength of one meal), and of the devil having carried him, *viz.* Christ, through the air to Jerusalem, and of his having set him on a pinnacle of the temple; and also, of his having carried him to a high mountain, and there having shewn him all the kingdoms of the

world, which is a thing altogether impossible; because not above one hemisphere can possibly be taken in or viewed by any creature at once: it being, therefore, so highly absurd, that no dependence can be laid thereon for truth—No; nor upon any thing else than was expressly taught by Jesus Christ himself, and what the apostles express conformable thereto.

Lastly, And to conclude; in reference to Christ having been tempted of the devil, with respect to the great miracles which are said to have been wrought by that infernal spirit, in shewing Christ all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, or twinkling of an eye, at one view; from this we may perceive of its having been nothing more than a mere dream or vision of the head: for to shew more than one hemisphere at once, as observed in the above, is a thing altogether impossible to be effected, either by devils, angels, or men.

From hence, we may infer, it had certainly been good for Christ's religion, and honour of the gospel in general, that many things recorded therein, not by Jesus Christ, had never been put on record, nor conveyed to us.

DISSERTATION III.

Of Judas having betrayed his Master.

VARIOUS are the reasons which have been ascribed for Judas having betrayed his Master: some of which are as follows. It is observed by a certain author, who, in speaking on that subject (he, not without plausibility, has remarked thereon) begins thus.

“ Matth. xxvi. 14, 15, 16 “ Then one of the
“ twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the
“ chief priests, and said unto them, What will
“ ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?
“ And they covenanted with him for thirty
“ pieces of silver. And from that time he,”
viz. Judas, “ sought opportunity to betray
“ him,” (*viz.* Jesus). Judas, therefore, to
fulfil the conditions of his agreement, from
that time forth sought opportunity of giving
them notice when the multitude was absent,
that they might send and apprehend him.
This last, or 16th verse, indicates that some
time passed between Judas’ bargain with the
priests, and his finding a proper opportunity
to deliver Jesus unto them. The treachery of
Judas in betraying his Master, must raise the
astonishment of every reader who has any just
notions of our Lord’s character; wherefore,
the motives swaying him to be guilty of such

an atrocious crime, and the circumstances which attend it, deserve a particular consideration. Some are of opinion, that he was pushed to commit this villany, by his resentment at the rebuke which Jesus gave him, on his blaming the woman who came with the precious ointment. But though this may have had its weight with him, we think it could not be the only motive; because the rebuke was not levelled against him singly, but was directed also to the rest who had, it appears, joined with him in censuring the woman; and who, being rebuked at the same time, must therefore, no doubt, have kept him in countenance. Besides, though he had been rebuked alone, it can hardly be supposed that so mild a reproof would provoke any person, how wicked soever, to the horrid act of murdering his friend; much less Judas, whose covetousness must have disposed him to bear every thing at the hand of his Master, from whom he expected great preferment. It is replied, that his resentment was so great, as to hinder him from exercising his reason, and hurried him on precipitately. It should be considered, that though he might strike the bargain with the priests a few hours after he was rebuked, almost two days passed before he fulfilled his bargain. Besides, to impute his treachery to the sudden impulses of a strong resentment, is such an alleviation of his crime, as seems inconsistent with the character given of it in scripture; where it is always represented in the blackest colours, and said to merite the

heaviest punishment. Others think that Judas betrayed his Master out of covetousness; but neither can this be admitted, if by covetousness is understood an eager desire of the reward given him by the priests: for the whole sum was not in value above three pounds, eighteen shillings sterling; a trifle, which the most covetous wretch cannot be supposed to have taken as an equivalent for the life of a friend, from whom he had the greatest expectations of gain.

The reader will see the strength of this reason, when he calls to mind, that all the disciples believed Jesus' kingdom was instantly to be erected; and that, according to the notion which they entertained of it, each of them, but especially the apostles, had the prospect of being raised in a little time to immense riches. Besides, the scripture tells us, that Judas' predominant passion was covetousness. He would not, therefore, be so inconsistent with himself, as, when just upon the point, as he thought, of reaping such a reward of his service, to throw all away, for the trifling sum above mentioned. Others attribute Judas' perfidy to his doubting whether his Master was the Messiah; and suppose that he betrayed him in a fit of despair. But, of all the solutions, this is the worst founded: for if Judas thought his Master was an impostor, he must have observed something in his behaviour, which led him to form such an opinion of him; and in that case, he certainly would

have mentioned it to the chief priests and elders, at the time he made the bargain with them; which is plain he did not, otherwise they would have put him in mind of it, when he came to them and declared his remorse for what he had done. Doubtless also, they would have urged it against our Lord himself in the course of his trial, when they were at such a loss for witnesses to prove their accusations; and against the apostles afterwards, when they reproved them for preaching in Jesus' name, Acts iv. 5.; and also, Chap. v. 27.

Further, had Judas thought his Master an impostor, and proposed nothing by his treachery but the price he put upon his life, How came he to sell him for such a trifle, when he well knew that the priests would have given him any sum, rather than not have gotten him into their hands?

To conclude, the supposition of Judas' believing that his Master was an impostor, is directly confuted by the solemn declaration which he made to the priests, implying the deepest conviction of Jesus' innocence, "I have sinned," said he, "in betraying the innocent blood." It is also confuted by the remorse which he felt for his crime, when Jesus was condemned; a remorse so bitter, that he was not able to bear it. But if Judas' treachery proceeded from none of the motives mentioned, it may be asked what other motive can be assigned for his conduct? The evangelist John indicates that he was so covet-

ous, as to steal money out of our Lord's bag. This account of him gives reason to believe that he first followed Jesus, with a view to the riches and other temporal advantages, which he expected the Messiah's friends would enjoy. Likewise, it authorizes us to think, that, as he had hitherto reaped none of these advantages, he might grow impatient under the delay: and the more so, that Jesus had of late discouraged all ambitious views among his disciples; and neglected to embrace the opportunity of erecting his kingdom that was offered by the multitude, who accompanied him into Jerusalem with hosannas. His impatience, therefore, becoming excessive, put him upon the scheme of delivering his master into the hands of the council, thinking it the most proper method of obliging him to assume the dignity of the Messiah; and consequently, of enabling him to reward his followers: for as this court was composed of the chief priests, elders, and scribes, that is, the principal persons belonging to the sacerdotal order, the representatives of the great families, and the doctors of the law, Judas did not doubt but that Jesus, when before such an assembly, would prove his pretensions to their full conviction, gain them over to his interests, and thereby enter forthwith on his regal dignity. And though he could not but be sensible that the measure which he took to bring this about, was very offensive to his Master, he might think that the success of it would procure his pardon, and even recommend him to favour. In the

mean time, his project, however plausible it might appear to one of his turn, was far from being free from difficulty; and, therefore, while he revolved it in his own mind, many things might occur to stagger his resolution. At length something happened which urged him on. Thinking himself affronted by the rebuke which Jesus had given him in the matter of the last anointing, and that rebuke sitting the heavier on him, as he had procured a former mark of his master's displeasure by an imprudence of the same kind, he was provoked: and though his resentment was not such as could inspire him with the horrid design of murdering his Master, it impelled him to execute the resolution he had formed of making him alter his measures. Rising up, therefore, from table, he went straight-way into the city to the high-priests, where he found the chief-priests and elders assembled together, consulting how they might take Jesus by subtilty. To them he made known his intention; and undertook for a small sum of money, to conduct a band of armed men to the place where Jesus usually spent the nights, and where they might apprehend him without the danger of a tumult. Thus the devil laying hold on the various passions which now agitated the traitor's breast, tempted him by them all. That these were the views with which Judas acted in betraying his Master, may be gathered, first, from the nature of the bargain which he struck with the priests: "What will you give me," said he, "and I will deliver him

“unto you?” He did not mean that he would deliver him up to be put to death: for though the priests had consulted among themselves how they might kill Jesus, none of them had been so barefaced as to deliver their intention publicly. They only proposed to bring him to a trial, for having assumed the character of the Messiah; and to treat him as it should appear he deserved. The offer, therefore, which Judas made to them of delivering him up, was in conformity to their public resolutions. Nor did they understand it in any other light: for had the priests thought that his design in this was to get Jesus punished with death, they must likewise have thought that he believed him to be an impostor; in which case, they certainly would have produced him as one of their principal evidences; no person being more fit to bear witness against any criminal than his companion. Or, though Judas had repented before the trial came on, and had withdrawn himself, the priests might have argued with great plausibility, both in their own court and before the governor, that for a man’s disciple to require the judge to bring him to condign punishment, branded him with such a suspicion of guilt, as was almost equal to a full proof. Likewise, when Judas returned to them with the money, declaring that he had sinned in betraying the innocent blood, instead of replying, “What is that to us? See thou to that,” it was the most natural thing in the world to have upbraided him with this stain he had put upon his master’s

character, by the bargain he had entered into with them. It is true, they called the money given him, "The price of blood," Matth. xxvii. 6.; but they did not mean this in the strictest sense, as they neither had hired Judas to assassinate his Master, nor can be supposed to have charged themselves with the guilt of murdering him. It was only the price of blood; consequently, being the reward they had given to the traitor for putting it in their power to take away Jesus' life, under the colour and form of public justice. Nay, it may be even doubted whether Judas asked the money as a reward of his service. He covetously indeed kept it; and the priests, for that reason, called it the price of blood. But he demanded it perhaps on pretence of gratifying and encouraging the people that were to assist him in apprehending Jesus.

To conclude, Judas knew that the rulers could not take away the life of any person whatsoever, the Romans having deprived them of that power, John xviii. 31.; and therefore, could have no design of this kind in delivering him up, not to mention that it was a common opinion among the Jews that the Messiah would never die, John xii. 34. an opinion which Judas might easily embrace, having seen his Master raise several persons from the dead; and among the rest, one who had been in the grave no less than four days. That the traitor's intention in betraying his Master was this, is probable from his hanging himself, when he found him condemned not by the go-

vernor, but by the council, whose prerogative it was to judge prophets. Had Judas proposed to take away his Master's life, the sentence of condemnation passed upon him, instead of filling him with despair, must have gratified him, being the accomplishment of his project; whereas, viewing it in this light, shews his circumstance to have been perfectly natural. Judas having been witness to the greatest part of our Lord's miracles, and having experienced the certain truth of them in the powers that had been conferred upon himself, could never think that the council would have condemned him as a false Christ; far less as a blasphemer. He knew him to be perfectly innocent; and expected that he would have wrought such miracles before the council, as should have constrained them to believe. Therefore, when he found that nothing of this kind was done, and that the priests had passed sentence of condemnation upon him, and were carrying him to the governor to get it executed, he repented of his rash and covetous project, came to the chief priests and elders, the persons to whom he had betrayed him, offered them their money again, and solemnly declared the deepest conviction of his Master's innocence, hoping that they would have desisted from the prosecution. But they were obstinate, and would not relent; upon which his remorse arose to such a pitch, that, unable to support the torment of his conscience, he went and hanged himself. Thus we think it probable, that the traitor's intention in delivering up his Master

was not to get him punished with death, but only to lay him under a necessity of proving his pretensions before the grandees, whom he had hitherto shunned; thinking that if he had yielded, the whole nation would immediately have submitted; and the disciples have been raised forthwith to the summit of their expectations.

This account of Judas' conduct is by no means calculated to lessen the foulness of his crime, which was the blackest imaginable: for even in the light above mentioned, it implied both an insatiable avarice, and a wilful opposition to the counsels of providence; and so rendered the actor of it a disgrace to human nature: but it is calculated to set the credibility of the traitor's actions in a proper light, and to shew that he was not moved to it by any thing suspicious in the character of his Master; because, according to this view of it, his perfidy, instead of implying that he entertained suspicions of his Master's integrity, plainly proves that he had the fullest conviction of his being the Messiah. And to say the truth, it was not possible for any one intimately acquainted with our Lord, as Judas was, to judge otherwise of him: having seen his miracles, which were great and true beyond expectation, and having experienced his power in the ability of working miracles, which, along with the rest of the apostles, he had received from him, and, no doubt, exercised with extraordinary pleasure. However, as the motives of mens actions at such a distance of time, must

needs be intricate, especially where history is in a great measure silent concerning them, we ought to be very modest in our attempts to unravel them. For which cause, the above account of Judas' conduct, is proposed only as a conjecture worthy of farther enquiry."

But further, and to conclude; nor was this ambition of a temporal kingdom circumscribed to Judas alone—No: for it was the earnest expectation of all his disciples, as is evident from Matth. xix. In this chapter we have an account of one who came and asked Jesus what good thing he should do that he might have eternal life. Jesus, in answer to his request, told him by what means he might obtain it; to which the young man makes his reply. Jesus, therefore, in return, tells him, "If thou wilt be perfect, Go sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow me." At which advice, the young man being startled, "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions." After Jesus having made observations on the young man's behaviour, Peter, in his usual warmth and public forwardness of spirit, speaks for himself and in name of the rest, saying, verse 27. "Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee, What shall we have therefore?" See also chapter xx. 20. "Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her two sons," viz. James and John, "worshipping him," or rather requesting him, "and desiring a certain thing of him." To whom he answers, "What wilt thou that I should do for thee? She saith

“ unto him, Grant that these my two sons
“ may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the
“ other on thy left, in thy kingdom.” To these
we may add as exprest in Luke xxiv. “ We
“ trusted that it had been he which should have
“ redeemed Israel;” that is, we trusted that
it had been he that should have entered upon
the empire of the world; and thereby have
delivered us from under the yoke of those, *viz.*
such as have the rule over us; and have given
unto us crowns and sceptres, that all the world
might become our servants. From this it ap-
pears evident, that each of the disciples had en-
tered into Jesus’ service with a view to a tem-
poral kingdom or worldly interest, according
as was expected by that people of the Messiah.

Lastly, but Judas, on account of Christ’s
delay in not declaring himself, as in the above,
was therefore tired and worn out, through
his worldly ambition; and was now become
impatient, and could no longer endure to live
in suspense; on which he resolved he would
therefore bring him to trial, that he might
declare himself as in the above, that they
might receive and enter upon their different
governments, which were expected to be given
them by the Messiah; and if not he, *viz.* the
Messiah, as they expected, no more time should
be lost by him or them in attending thereon.

And to conclude, it is, therefore, now ob-
vious, from what motives not only Judas, but
all of the disciples, set out in following Christ;
not from a prospect or in expectation of a spi-
ritual, but of a temporal kingdom, the same

as Judas, though not carrying their ambition to the same degree of excess with that of Judas, whose patience, from worldly ambition, was altogether worn out, as in the above.

DISSERTATION IV.

On Rom. viii. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

THOUGH the meaning of these verses is entirely evident, the same has been disputed by those (as expressed in 2 Peter) who strenuously adhere to the literal sense of this and almost every other text, and thereby wrest them to their own destruction; but of this more afterwards. The following is an illustration of some, perhaps of as learned men as in Britain.

Verse 19. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Creature, in the language of St. Paul and the New Testament, signifies mankind, especially the Gentile world; see Col. i. 23. Mark xvi. 15. compared with Matth. xxviii. 19. The whole race of mankind, the Gentile world as well as we, *viz.* Christians, is in such a state of vanity or mutability, dissatisfaction and suffering, that it has an earnest expectation of, and longing for something better than this present state. It was quite to the apostle's purpose in this place, to point at the common calamities of

mankind: for this was an argument why christians should be patient in a state of sufferings; because it was in fact no more than the state of the world in general. Mankind considered in the bulk were groaning under various pressures; and consequently, anxiously waiting for, and vehemently desiring something better than the present scene of vanity. That the apostle by the creature does not mean only the christian world or creation, or as some think the Gentiles in particular that were converts to christianity, seems pretty evident, for these reasons; because, 1. That the creature itself also, or even the very creature, shall be delivered, &c. (Verse 21.) plainly points at something different from the body of christians, and in some respects inferior to them: for he would never have said of Christians, even the very saints shall be delivered, &c. 2. The children of God are distinguished from the creature or the creation, verse 21.; but the children of God are christians, verse 16. therefore, the creature cannot be christians. 3. He saith, verse 20. "The creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but through him who had subjected the same in hope," &c.

Now, we know of no other subjecting the creature to vanity, but that, Gen. iii. 19. and that includes all mankind, Chap. iv. 22. The whole creation must surely comprehend all mankind, as it doth, Mark xvi. 15. Col. i. 23. And that we have no sufficient ground to extend it farther than mankind, that is, to the

brute creatures, will appear, if we consider,
1. That the same phrase is used to signify mankind only, Mark xvi. 15. "Go unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," that is, to the whole creation; which certainly must needs signify only man; also, Col. i. 23. 2. No creature in this world but man could be subject to vanity willingly or not willingly. 3. Whether we understand the 23d verse, of christians in general, or of the apostles only, we cannot well suppose the apostles would bring either into a comparison with brutes; "And not only they, but we also ourselves, who have received the first fruits of the Spirit," &c. But it may be asked, How can all mankind desire and wait for the manifestation of the sons of God, or of the glory that shall be revealed in them, when but a small part of mankind know any thing of it? To this may be answered, that we know, as the apostle saith, verse 22. that all mankind do groan under the afflictions and pressures of this present world, sensible of its imperfection and vanity; and consequently must desire something better. And although they may not know what better things are, yet the apostle knew it; and he speaks according to his own knowledge, and not of theirs. He affirms of his own knowledge, what their expectation would issue in. Their earnest waiting was in fact, however they might be ignorant of it, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. And he proves this, verses 20, 21. as supposing the christians to whom he wrote

might be ignorant of it. Which shews, that when he affirms the earnest desire of mankind, after a release from the sufferings of this life, is awaiting for the manifestation of the sons of God, he speaks not of what Heathens, or even Christians, understood or believed, but of what he himself knew and believed to be true. In scripture phrase, desire and expectation is ascribed to creatures, in reference to things they want, and which tend to their advantage, though they explicitly know nothing of them. And so the glory which shall be revealed in christians, may be called here the expectation of the creature or mankind, as being what would fill the utmost wishes and desires of all mankind, whenever they should be acquainted with, or put into any hopes of it.

Verse 20. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope." "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly;" mankind considered in general as God's creatures, not as corrupt and wicked, were made subject to vanity, to dissatisfaction, sufferings, and death; "not willingly," not from choice or consent, nor by any wilful act of their own. They did not all sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression, Rom. v. 14. and so subject themselves to death; but by reason of him, or through him, who subjected the same in hope (by the sentence of God who saw it fit to subject them to sorrow and death; but not finally, but with the expectation of something

better, of some happy change, verse 21. "Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "Because" or rather that, for so the Greek signifies "the creature itself"); all mankind considered in general as God's creatures, not as corrupt and wicked, shall be delivered from the natural corruption to which they are in bondage; and shall be enlarged into the glorious liberty which belongs to those who are the sons of God; that is, shall be made immortal and happy in the enjoyment of God. This must be understood of mankind, as well as of christians, only so far as by answering the end of their creation, they are prepared for immortality, and are not liable for their wickedness to the second death. The creature is mankind considered to what they ought to be, according to the laws of their creation. And possibly, for this reason, the apostle chose to denominate mankind by the creature or creation.

Verse 22. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." It is obvious, that the whole race of mankind are extremely sensible of the misery of the present life; and have, from the commencement of mortality to this day, all groaned under sorrows, and sufferings; and been in pain like a woman in labour, longing to be delivered from her burden. How David groaned under the vanity and

shortness of life, may be seen Psal. lxxxix. 47, 48. Which complaint may be met with in every man's mouth; so that, even those who have not the first fruits of the Spirit, whereby they are assured of a future happy life in glory, do also desire to be freed from a subjection to corruption, and have uneasy longings after immortality.

Verse 23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *viz.* the redemption of our body." And not only is the bulk of mankind subject to many sorrows, but even we apostles, who are, of all men, most signally distinguished by the pledges of God's love, the most eminent spiritual gifts and miraculous powers, even we ourselves are not exempted from sufferings; but it is the good pleasure of God that we, as well as other men, should remain under the pressures of life; and therefore, we, as well as they, are yet in a state of expectation, and groan under various heavy burdens, waiting for the adoption, the great period when we shall be invested in the privileges of the sons of God. That the apostles are here meant, seems beyond doubt, for the following reasons.

1. "But ourselves also, even we ourselves," are very emphatical expressions; and direct our thoughts to some persons of distinction and eminence. 2. "Who have received the first fruits of the Spirit," is strictly true of the

apostles only. 3. There will be little or no argument in this verse, if it is understood of the whole body of christians. It will be only telling them what is supposed to be already known, that they were in a state of affliction, waiting for the future glory. But it is a good argument, if understood of the apostles, and properly enough advanced, after a general survey of the sufferings of mankind. Look at the world in common, you see all labouring under sorrows and afflictions. Look at us apostles, who are most signally distinguished by the pledges of God's love, the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, even we are not exempted from suffering; but it is the will of God, that even we should remain under the pressures of life, and in a state of expectation."

Having concluded what has been observed on this passage, I shall, therefore, add my opinion; which is as follows. "For the earnest expectation of the creature," *viz.* the human race, "waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God;" (namely, such as serve and obey him), desiring to be released from the sufferings of this present life. "For the creature was made subject to vanity" or rather, that is, subject to fall, trouble, disease, pain, and death, not by Adam, as vainly imagined by some: for not Adam, but God, could possibly give us any hopes, as exprest latter clause, saying, "not willingly," not from choice, "but by reason of him," who created him in a probationary state, liable to fall, *viz.* God,

“ who hath subjected the same in hope;” that is, in the expectation of something better, than the short and sublunary enjoyments of this present life; “ Because the creature itself also,” *viz.* the whole human race, the evil as well as the good, “ shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God,” shall enjoy a resurrection from the dead as well as they.

From hence, it is therefore to be remarked, that they who make the word “ creature” to include the brutal creation, with those of the rational, do thereby make a resurrection of every particular soul of life in the brutal creation, as well as those of the rational or human species, *viz.* mankind.

“ For we know that the whole creation,” *viz.* every human soul, “ groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they,” *viz.* mankind in general, “ but we ourselves also,” in distinction from those of unbelievers, *viz.* we his apostles, “ which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *viz.* the redemption of our body.” Nor is this expectation of deliverance circumscribed to unbelievers, *viz.* the rest of those his rational creatures, independent of us christians—No: for even we his apostles long for the accomplishment and making out thereof. What is here exprest by the words “ we ourselves,” *viz.* we his apostles, in distinction from the rest of the rational creation, or hu-

man race, is an incontestable evidence, that the word "creature," in the above, implies only the human or rational creation, independent of the brutal or animal tribes. Hence, and to proceed,

They who explain this text, "of the whole creation groaning and travelling in pain together until now" (*viz.* till the time exprest by St. Paul) of the brutal creation, is from a mere ignorant or brutish notion, of the whole animal tribes being subjected to slavery, pain, and death, on account of Adam's first sin, as supposed by fanatics, who hold the Jesuitical doctrine of original sin, and would have the brutal creation to groan on account thereof. But to shew the absurdity of such a belief, of either seekness, pain, or temporal death, being a consequence of Adam's sin, the text on which they build this interpretation implies no such meaning—No; nor has the smallest reference or relation to temporal or physical death: for the words on which they build the deceit, are expressly these, Gen. ii. 17. latter clause, "For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die."

Now, it is expressly evident, from what is recorded of Adam in said history, that he did not die the day on which it is said he did eat the forbidden fruit—No: for we are told from said history, that he, *viz.* Adam, lived nine hundred and thirty years after that period, in which it is said he did eat thereof; and then died. From which it is, therefore, now evident, from the tenour of what is here exprest,

that misery, pain, and temporal death, are by no means a consequence of Adam's sin: or if they had, as exprest therein, he had died inevitably the same day on which it is said he did eat the fruit. I know it is objected by some (who are advocates for that doctrine), who understand and take up this text in a literal sense, and thus wrest it, as they do others, to their own destruction, that in the day whereon he did eat, the sentence took place against him; therefore, was dead by law; which they sustain for death. But, in answer to this objection, of Adam's being dead by law the day whereon he did eat the forbidden fruit, though a person shall receive sentence of death, he can never possibly die, in virtue of said sentence, till the appointed day of his execution. No. For proof, I shall suppose as follows.

If a man shall receive sentence of death, and if he, betwixt the day on which he receives his sentence, and the day appointed for his execution, shall beget one, two, three, four, six, or more children, do all these children die the day on which he who begot them dies? No; which is not only an evident, but an incontestable proof that the man, though under sentence of death, was not physically dead by virtue thereof, till the day of execution, and the sentence executed against him according to law: for a dead man can never possibly beget children—No.

Further, to this we may add, though all the world are born to die, none thereof are physically dead, till once death actually takes

place—No; or if dead, the human race would become wholly extinct; which may teach every human soul, who are not wholly shut up under gross darkness, the brutish folly of such a doctrine.

But further, with respect to the origin and foundation recorded in Genesis, on which this subject is built, and depends on for its authenticity; of the Garden of Eden, or what they call paradise; the fable of the serpent, *viz.* the devil; his interview and discourse with the woman called Eve, and of his prevailing, or rather decoying her to eat of what they called the tree of knowledge, or forbidden fruit; and of Eve persuading the man Adam to eat, along with her, of said tree; and of there being a curse pronounced by God (not only of temporal, but of spiritual death), upon the man Adam, his wife Eve, and their posterity, and even on the ground itself; and also, their being expelled the Garden, what they call paradise, on account thereof; as to the origin and stress laid on all these, if it had not been priests, on whom the fabrication of such an absolute fiction depends, and to whom so many millions have been paid in support of such a notorious falsehood, of which they have taken the advantage of the people, by requiring of them to believe therein for divine truth; if it had not been the above gentlemen, to whom so much has been paid in support thereof, the absurdity had never yet existed nor taken place in the creation of God—No, it never possibly had. And to require a belief in such a palp-

able fiction, is, in express words, a downright insult upon the understandings of men: for no human soul can possibly believe therein for truth, if not divesting himself of the powers bestowed on him of God, which would be no less than putting himself on a level with the brutes that perish, on which reason was never bestowed.

I cannot properly conclude the above, without remarking, as formerly exprest in our exposing of this ancient heresy. We are told by John, Chap. iv. 8. that "God is love;" and this, I apprehend, is what no wise man can justly refuse; yea, the most wicked, who has despised his own mercy, not excepted. But if such a thing were true, as that all inankind were made sinners, and thereby damned upon account of Adam's first sin, can infants say so, who are dismissed from life? Millions of whom perhaps die in the womb and never see light; therefore, can neither foresee the event, nor prevent the action for which they were sent into hell. Could such, if the above were true, when not sparing them that they might be saved, say upon justice, that "God was love" to them? No, they could not, without being guilty of the most notorious falsehood, express it. Or, Is it possible that any of the human race can say, upon justice, that such, in lifting up their eyes in hell, could say that God either was, or had love towards them? No, not possible. But you who are agents for such a damnable doctrine, the ideas of which are by far too gross to be received by madmen,

would rather that all in both heaven and earth should fall a sacrifice thereto, than that such an ancient heresy should be brought into disrepute.

The above is more than what the whole human race can possibly make answer to; which may certainly teach every soul thereof, the fallacious nature of such a damnable deceit. But what need I speak this; for man is an animal. When rejecting reason for his unerring guide; there is no opinion; or religion under heaven, can possibly be so gross; yea; though it were to worship the devil; if bred up therein from his infant state; but what he will cling to, and tacitly believe in; and by no means part or give up with when he is old. This, I apprehend, if our eyes were but as open as Balaam's when in company with Balak, is no more than what we may see around us every day. But God be thanked the above doctrine applauded by priests and such as adhere thereto, is not the doctrine of God—No; but of the devil and his agents; and derives its existence merely from the deceitful brains of priests, or what we may rather call angels of darkness; by whom alone the world is kept in ignorance. Nor can one human soul comply with the belief of what is required by said gentlemen, but must first renounce the powers received, with which they are endued from God; and thereby come on a level in transmutizing themselves into brutes, in obedience to their priests: for it is an express data devis-

ed by said gentlemen, for dispossessing men of that heavenly pilot they enjoy from God, that by submitting thereto, they class them with the brutal tribes. Nor will those in after ages look back on the present but with disgrace, in their believing the deceit, however false and absurd millions of treasure has actually been paid to, and received by priests, in support of what they impiously set forth in the name of divine truth.

Hence, nor is it to be wondered at, though priests, the propagators of the above extraneous doctrine, with others of like nature, be so liberal in dividing out such unlimited portions of hell-fire to those who misbelieve the deceit, considering the immense sums appointed them in support thereof, in place of truth.

And further, nor is this all—No: in short, thousands of protestants, who attend punctually upon church, of whom the priests are extremely sensible, if some part of the service does not consist of original sin, with other damnable doctrines of like nature ingrafted on Christ's gospel, by self-interested and designing men, of which they are excessively fond; and most eagerly thirst and gape for a draught thereof, the same as the Papists do for a brimful of holy water, without which they would suppose their time entirely, even altogether, lost in attending thereon.

But can ever such who wantonly impose such an arrant falsehood upon the minds of the people, in requiring of them to believe therein, expect to meet with God in mercy, till

once they renounce and unfeignedly repent thereof; and publicly warn all such who ignorantly believe therein against the deceit? No, if God is just, as he certainly is, they never possibly can; nor have they the smallest ground to expect it—No, they have not.

With respect to the above, Is it possible that any person can read over the foregoing with candour, if not wilfully blind, without perceiving the truth of what is here exprest? But this, I acknowledge, the populace are not only born with the priests chains or wreaths about their necks, but are even bred up from their infant state, to believe as truth, though altogether false, whatever he requires they should adhere to. But to proceed,

Having shewn the absurdity of explaining these texts of the brutal creation, I shall likewise make it evident why, and from what cause, they have misunderstood the meaning of said texts, with those of others; and is as follows.

It is observed by Peter in his second epistle, when speaking of the Apostle Paul, Chap. iii. 15, 16. “ Even as our beloved brother Paul “ also, according to the wisdom given unto “ him, hath written unto you; as also in all “ his epistles, speaking in them of these things; “ in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and “ unstable wrest, as they do also the other “ scriptures, to their own destruction.” And on these I shall observe with others, “ in which,” that is, in which epistles of Paul, “ are

some things hard to be understood." In St. Paul's epistles there are some difficult points handled, which were greatly abused and perverted, even in that age; and which have been perverted by unlearned and unstable men, in almost every age since; such as that of free grace; election, and reprobation; particularly Rom. ix. and justification by faith without works. St. Peter does not say that every thing in Paul's epistles was obscure, but only, that in them some things were difficult to be understood, "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." Thus what St. Paul hath said of faith in opposition to works, *viz.* in gospel-duties, they interpreted, as if faith was sufficient without any good works; and as if faith and charity could be exercised, let the works of the body be what they would.

Hence, they did not consider the series and purport of the apostle's argument. The word we render "unlearned" in this verse, properly signifies men of an indocile temper, bigoted to a system, who are averse or unwilling to learn. Persons of a volatile and unteachable temper, cannot be expected to study St. Paul's epistles, or the other books of scripture, with that closeness and attention, which is requisite to find out the scope and connection, and which take in the full view and comprehensive meaning of what they call the sacred writers. Such persons oft-times meddle with the most difficult texts; because they are the most flexible: and when they pick out single

sentences, and detach them from the rest, they can make them say what they will, and speak what they please.

“ It is to be observed that the Greek word, which they render here “wrest,” properly signifies to put any one to the torture or rack to make them confess:” so that, St. Peter implies, that some torture and rack texts of scripture, to force out of them whatever they have a mind; and to make them speak what they were never intended to signify. If ignorant, unlearned, and unsteady men, torture and pervert the gospel, it is the duty of learned men, such as are steady and yet open to conviction, to explain it with the greatest strength and clearness, that the steady and yet teachable, may not want sufficient helps to read and understand them.

Hence, their torturing the scriptures to their own destruction, plainly shews that they are bad men. Even the difficult places of scripture were not tortured and perverted by them, but by design, and out of choice. The fault was not in the scriptures—No; but in themselves, who obliged them to speak whatever they thought was most fitting for their own purpose: for they were resolved to support and continue in their opinions, without love to either truth or righteousness. But to this we may add, if the above proceeds from ignorance and from a want of opportunity to increase our knowledge, and not from obstinacy or prejudice, God, who knows our frame, will make all just and equitable allowances for

our imperfections; and will never damn any man for mere errors of understanding, or mistakes of judgment—No; if not pregnant with that which tendeth to immorality. Further, and to proceed,

In consideration of the above, I shall therefore observe as follows. “Which they that are unlearned wrest, as they do the other scriptures, to their own destruction.” The unlearned, no doubt, commonly understand and take up the scriptures in a literal sense; but the most unlearned and unteachable of all, are they who, through a prepossession got through the prejudice of education (like the Jews in expecting the Messiah to have been a temporal prince), voluntarily shut up themselves under systems of divinity as infallible, can never possibly come to the knowledge of the truth—No.

All such who shut up themselves, as above, are certainly the most unteachable and proof against knowledge; therefore, since proof against knowledge, are certainly, above all others, the most unlearned: for both the miser with his bags of gold, and he who, from choice, shuts himself up against understanding, are alike. For neither riches nor learning can profit us, if the devil is permitted either to keep the key, or lay an arrestment thereon—No.

Hence, it is neither colleges nor academies, that will bring men who voluntarily shut up themselves from understanding, when proof against instruction, to the knowledge of the truth—No: for it is only he that lays himself

open to conviction or instruction, and is willing to search for truth as for hid treasure, and upon its discovery taketh hold and cleaveth fast thereto, that can possibly attain to the knowledge of it. But wherever men are open to conviction, colleges and academies, when properly improved, are certainly the best introduction to understanding; but, on the other hand, can give no increase as in the above.

Further, if mankind had been as much bigoted to, and prejudiced in favours of a system or systematical doctrines, and thereby as unteachable and proof against conviction as now, neither christianity, nor a reformation from popery, could possibly have been effected or taken place until this day.

Lastly, As observed by Jesus Christ of the Jews his countrymen, of whom he was come, and is as follows, Matth. xiii. 14, 15, 16.
“ And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of
“ Isaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear,
“ and shall not understand; and seeing ye
“ shall see, and shall not perceive: for this
“ peoples heart is waxed gross, and their ears
“ are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have
“ closed; lest at any time they should see with
“ their eyes, and hear with their ears, and
“ should understand with their heart, and
“ should be converted, and I should heal them.
“ But blessed are your eyes,” namely, they
whose hearts are open to instruction, conviction,
and understanding, “ for they see; and your
“ ears, for they hear;” so that, if you do not

retract, they shall certainly receive the knowledge and inexpressible blessings of truth.

Having, therefore, no longer time to insist, I shall conclude this subject with Peter's advice to christians, Verse 18. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." The persons to whom St. Peter wrote this, were in danger of being led aside by the Judaizing, false teachers; but to prevent their being satisfied with an implicit faith, orders them as in the above. Now, if we are to proceed as here express, What reason can be assigned why we should not reject the mistakes of our forefathers, as they rejected those of the church of Rome, and of their forefathers?

Hence, they who are afraid of new light, and an increase of knowledge, seem not only to betray a bad cause, but also appear as being conscious that their opinions, to which they are so much bigoted, will by no means stand the test of a strict or severe examination.

Be not ye, therefore, afraid, as in the above, but "search after knowledge as for hid treasure," and cease not till ye obtain it; and be not afraid, for truth is never at a loss nor hurt by a freedom of enquiry—No; but by an arbitrary restraint in search thereof, requiring of people to believe, however contrary thereto. Truth, I acknowledge, may indeed suffer by the latter, but can never possibly be hurt by the former, *viz.* enquiry.

The End of the Fifth Volume.

